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JUNE 2015 | £3.90 | UK EDITION

MAGAZINE

Carey Mulligan

On rebellion,
rejection and
lucky breaks

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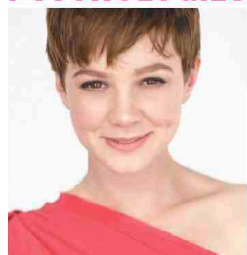
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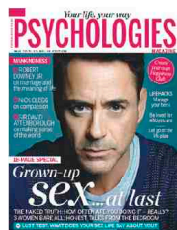
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Embrace decorative pattern in your home for unique results

If you can't always find a copy of this magazine help is at hand. Complete this form and give it to your local shop. They'll arrange for a copy of each issue to be reserved for you. They may even be able to deliver to your home – just ask!

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PSYCHOLOGIES

Kelsey Media, Cudham Tithe Barn,
Berry's Hill, Cudham, Kent TN16 3AG

(01959 541444, email letters@psychologies.co.uk)

OUR TEAM

Editor Suzy Greaves
Deputy Editor Lauren Hadden
Art Director Vanessa Grzywacz
Art Editor Lynne Lanning
Associate Editor Anita Chaudhuri
Contributing Editor, Features Elizabeth Heathcote
Entertainment Editor At Large Lorian Haynes
Dossier and The Fix Editor Ali Roff
Beauty and Wellbeing Director Eminé Ali Rushton
Beauty and Wellbeing Editor Amerley Ollennu
Picture Editor Laura Doherty
Chief Sub/Production Editor Danielle Woodward
Sub Editor Anne-Claire Heels

ADVERTISING & PRODUCTION

Commercial Manager Emma Doran (01959 543706)
emma.doran@kelsey.co.uk
Advertising Sales Anne Fleming (01959 543716)
anne.fleming@kelsey.co.uk
Production Supervisor Rachel Dyke (01733 353397)
rachel.dyke@kelsey.co.uk
Production Manager Karen Wayman
Acting Production Manager Charlotte Whittaker

MANAGEMENT

Managing Director Phil Weeden
Chief Executive Steve Wright
Chairman Steve Annetts
Finance Director Joyce Parker-Sarioglu
Creative Directors Vicky Ophield and Emma Dublin
Retail Distribution Manager Eleanor Brown
Audience Development Manager Andy Cotton
Subscriptions Marketing Manager Daniel Webb
Brand Marketing Manager Rebecca Gibson
Events Manager Kat Chappell
Events Marketing Manager Sarah Jackson

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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- UK customer service team: 01959 543747; subs@kelsey.co.uk

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William Gibbons, 28 Planetary Road, Willenhall, Wolverhampton
WV13 3XT; 01902 730011; williamgibbons.co.uk
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CONTRIBUTORS

Meet three of the people who have taken part in the creation of this issue of *Psychologies*



Jane Alexander

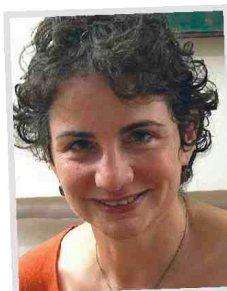
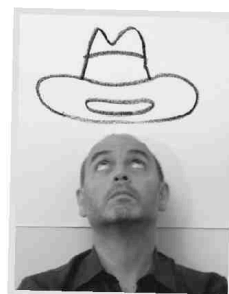
Journalist

In her 25 years as a wellbeing journalist, Jane has tried pretty much every therapy, retreat and remedy on the block. She is allergic to spa 'journeys' and twitches at group hugs but her most challenging experience yet was a stay at a Zen Buddhist retreat, where she found herself asking one of the most difficult questions of all, 'Who am I?'. Find out what happened next on page 42.

Serge Bloch

Illustrator

A French illustrator and author, Serge has worked for our eponymous sister magazine in France, as well as the *Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times* and Oxford University Press. We love the simple, humorous and evocative visualisations of common emotions that he created for our Dossier this month – find his interpretations of anger, sadness and more starting on page 74.



Temma Ehrenfeld

Journalist

A health and science writer based in New York, Temma originally worked at *Newsweek* and now blogs at *Psychology Today* while working as a freelance journalist and writing her first novel. Her experiences of her own attempts to describe her sexuality led her to research her piece for *Psychologies*, 'Can we drop the labels?' – turn to page 50 for more.

GLOBAL EDITIONS

Groupe Psychologies, 2-8 rue Gaston-Rébuffat, 75019 Paris, France. Tel: 01 44 65 58 00

President & CEO, Editorial Director: Arnaud de Saint Simon International Editor-in-Chief: Philippe Romon (philippe@psychologies.com)



PSYCHOLOGIES FRANCE
Editor-in-Chief: Laurence Folléa



PSYCHOLOGIES GERMANY
Madame Verlag, Leonrodstraße
52, 80636 Munich. Tel: +49 89 6974
9276. Editor: Robert Sandmann
Editor-in-Chief: Jenny Levie



PSYCHOLOGIES ROMANIA
Ringier Magazines, 6 Dimitri
Pompeiu Street, Bucharest. Tel: +40 212
03 08 00. Managing Director: Mihnea
Vasilii (mihnea.vasilii@ringier.ro)
Editor-in-Chief: Iuliana Alexa (iuliana.alex@ringier.ro) Advertising Manager:
Monica Pop (monica.pop@ringier.ro)



PSYCHOLOGIES BELGIUM
Edition Ventures, Chaussée de
Louvain 431D, 1830 Lasne. Tel: +32 2 379
29 90 Editorial Director: Marie-Christine
De Wasseige (mc.dewasseige@ventures.be)
Chief editor (French): Christiane Thiry
(christiane.thiry@ventures.be)
Chief editor (Flemish): Barbara Van den
Abeele (b.vandenabeele@ventures.be)
Advertising Manager: Manon Sepulchre
(manon.sepulchre@ventures.be)



PSYCHOLOGIES RUSSIA
Hearst Shkulev Media,
Psychologies Russia, 31 b Shabolovskaya
Street, Moscow 115162.
Tel: +7 495 981 39 10 President: Viktor
Shkulev (vshkulev@hsmmedia.ru)

Editor-in-Chief: Xenia Kiseleva
(xkiseleva@hsmmedia.ru) Publisher
and Advertising Manager: Anna
Klopova (aklopova@hsmmedia.ru)



PSYCHOLOGIES CHINA
Beijing Hearst Advertising,
Capital Land Tower, Jia 6 #1601,
Jian Guo Men Wai av, ChaoYang
district, Beijing 100 022.
Tel: +86 10 85 67 66 88.
Chairman: Victor Visot
Editor-in-Chief: Vanessa Hu
(vanessa.hu@hearst.com.cn)
Commercial Director: Alice Ch'ng
(alice.chng@hearst.com.cn)
Advertising Manager: Elaine Tai
(elaine.tai@hearst.com.cn)

The power of emotions

I adore the new film *Far From The Madding Crowd* starring Carey Mulligan, our cover star this month. Based on the novel by Thomas Hardy, Mulligan plays a mesmerising Bathsheba Everdene, the independent heroine, who swats away potential suitors and strives to create her own destiny. I love her courage, her rebellion – and her recklessness as she eventually gets swept away by love. But although it may make for great drama in a novel and film, it's perhaps not the best recipe for happiness in life – or love.

So I'm delighted that this month in our 18-page Dossier, we explore how to increase our emotional intelligence and self-awareness so we can use our emotions as an internal guidance system to lead us to our best life. Imagine being able to use *all* your emotions – no matter how dark – to be your compass to keep you on course for your 'true north'. To let you know when your boundaries have been crossed, to wake up your desires and create a life that makes your heart leap not sink... Yes, it is possible. See page 74.

In fact, our magazine is full of women this month who have harnessed their strong emotions to tackle everything from climate change to existential crisis. Author Naomi Klein, on page 40, talks about how once she stopped being paralysed by fear about what we're doing to our environment, she could focus on looking for a bigger, more creative solution – which has led to her latest book *This Changes Everything*. On page 42, Jane Alexander, renowned wellbeing author, writes about how a sudden loss of faith helped her dig deeper than she's ever done for the meaning of life – with Zen-like results.

If all that digging deep makes you want to go back to bed, then turn to page 98 for our Healing Spa Special. 'Modern life can take us to points of no return,' says Eminé Ali Rushton, our beauty and wellbeing director. Here, we recommend our favourite boltholes to retreat to when you need somewhere to heal and rejuvenate when it all gets a bit too much. Or you can join our Get Back Your Bedtime campaign (see pages 48 and 116), and simply create a nourishing full-stop to your day.

Here's to letting it all out and letting it all go this spring.

Suzy

PHOTOGRAPH OF SUZY: LUBI PEDDER. PHOTOGRAPH OF JANE ALEXANDER: RICHARD LAPPAS



Suzy Greaves
Editor, with Oscar
the office dog

Viewpoint

Let us know what you think of the magazine and each month we'll publish the best letters



Shami Chakrabarti

[SHARED VALUES] Shami Chakrabarti is director of human rights campaign group, Liberty. She shares her core values with us

It had a motto, it would be 'everybody's equal, no one's superior'. There is something inherently special about every human being and I try to live that in my work and all my communications. There is no bright line between work and play for me – life is quite seamless.

I believe if we come together, we can do amazing things. Our nation has a rich culture and to the end, every one has the right to participate in your 15th properly counting your money you might think you're a woman, but you don't have the greater security and safety that comes with being an agent of change. Women with being generous and optimistic, and being a better society.

I have been put down by other people, but not for long. I've been in a room of 100 people and suddenly all of a sudden I've been put down by other people, but not for long.

When I was about 10 and the head for the Yorkshire Ripper was on, I made a remark about what they should do to that animal when they caught him. And my mother said, 'You're not a girl, you're a girl, and what would you do to that animal? It was a powerful moment in my young life, the start of my journey towards law and human rights.

My parents were migrants from India to London in the early 1960s. They lived in a small house and despite the fact that all over the world who were their guest family. The people who were their Christmas and birthday were from India, Pakistan, Jamaica, Caribbean, and from all over the world.

My parents encouraged me to discuss and challenge things from an early age. My mother, who was a nurse, encouraged me to discuss and challenge things from an early age.

I could do whatever I wanted, and to take opportunities, particularly in the context of education and work.

I make my argument based, I do listen, and I can change my mind and accommodate and negotiate – but I have strong views on what I believe in.

The middle years are tough, but there are also compensations. One is learning from young people. They have the most energy, and often the things that matter, but also personal things. I value my 15-year-old son's view on politics and human rights. Some things come with experience, and some things come with freshness.

I've experienced racism but nothing compared to other people, and I think the right outside racism can be an advantage sometimes. You don't fit so easily into the class system. If people have you placed in their mind as a woman, then they have to place you in another box.

The biggest injustice in the planet is gender injustice. It's entrenched in the home, the family, the workplace, the community – everywhere. It's also the case that, if you happen to be a woman, it would be the most for related issues – not just, but also the most for related issues.

There have been more rules around freedom lately but the same needs to become action. I don't think my mother's generation would be as free as mine is now. There was a time in the 1970s and where we should be by now. There was a time when we were not free to do what we want to do.

I am optimistic, because I don't want to live any other way. I think there are so many things, better than me, and that has got me through the difficult times.

STAR LETTER

FROM OUR MALE BAG...

I just spent a very pleasurable hour in the early spring sun reading my wife's April issue of *Psychologies*. In that time I learnt about developing good habits, Shami Chakrabarti, drawing boundaries between work and life (a BIG need of mine!), how to be soft yet successful, taking your mind for a walk and all manner of wonderful food. The point of telling you all this is to say I'm sure I can't be the only husband, partner, father or brother who relates to the subjects you cover. **Jon**

PHOTO COMPETITION

Would you like to showcase your talents in *Psychologies*? Each month, we are asking you to submit your best photo on a theme. We'll print our winner in the next issue of *Psychologies* and on psychologies.co.uk the following month, and the winner gets a bag of goodies! The next theme is 'Happiness'. Send your photo attached in an email to pictures@psychologies.co.uk by midnight on 31 May.

WIN! THIS MONTH'S STAR LETTER AND PHOTO COMPETITION PRIZE:

A Pai skincare set, worth £92*



THE WINNER THIS MONTH

The theme is 'New Beginnings': that was just what I was looking for two years ago. I left London for Nepal on a six-week break, mainly spent with a family as well as teaching in a local school. I sharpened a vast number of pencils, each one symbolising a fresh start. **Brigitta Cseh**

*FOR FULL T&Cs, SEE PSYCHOLOGIES.CO.UK **PAI SKINCARE SET INCLUDES CAMELLIA & ROSE GENTLE HYDRATING CLEANSER, £28; LOTUS & ORANGE BLOSSOM BIOAFFINITY TONIC, £30; CHAMOMILE & ROSEHIP CALMING DAY CREAM, £34

EMAIL LETTERS@PSYCHOLOGIES.CO.UK. THE THEME FOR THE NEXT PHOTO COMPETITION* IS 'HAPPINESS'. DEADLINE: 31 MAY



SOCIAL NETWORKING

Thank you for 'The dirty art of networking' (April). I often find it difficult to talk to strangers in social situations, never mind networking. This comes from a combination of ingrained shyness and lack of confidence in myself. Since moving to the Netherlands this has become even harder as most social occasions take place in Dutch, making my approach to strangers twice as difficult. Your article has given me inspiration and I'll definitely try out your advice to just go and speak to someone, and not worry about their reaction, at the next social event. **Joanne**

WORLD OF FRIENDSHIP

I loved your article 'The Age Gap' (April). The difficulty can be in finding and starting these types of friendships; however I recently joined a club called Soroptimist International. It's a global volunteer movement where women of all ages meet together to advocate, promote and fundraise to support women's and girls' projects, both locally and internationally. As an added bonus I have found my friendship group hugely expanded across many generations, comprising women from many different and interesting stages and walks of life. **Geraldine**

THIS MONTH'S WINNING LETTER

I'd like to thank...

Dear Strangers,

Please forgive my impersonal greeting but although you have touched my life, I don't know your names.

You probably have no idea who I am or why I am writing to you, so I'll remind you of our shared history.

You handed my mislaid wallet to the bar staff. I was delighted to find not a single penny missing. I truly appreciate your honesty.

At the end of your holiday, that wet, wet summer, you left your passes to the local theme park in the cottage for us to use. Thank you for your thoughtful generosity. We had a wonderful day out.

You passed me on the platform at Exeter station, paused to look in your handbag and wordlessly handed me a tissue as I waved an emotional farewell. That gesture spoke louder than anything you could have said. So gentle, and you respected the privacy of my grief.

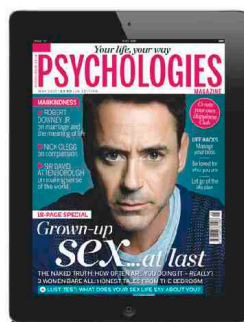
When I ran my first marathon you cheered and shouted words of encouragement, urging me to keep limping towards the finish line.

I'll bet you still don't remember me. Our brief encounter was probably inconsequential to you. I, however, remember it well. You were kind to me in my moment of need, with no expectation of a return favour.

Not everyone would have been as altruistic, so I'm very grateful that it was you whose path crossed with mine.

Thank you,

Azzy



THIS MONTH'S LETTER OF GRATITUDE WINS...

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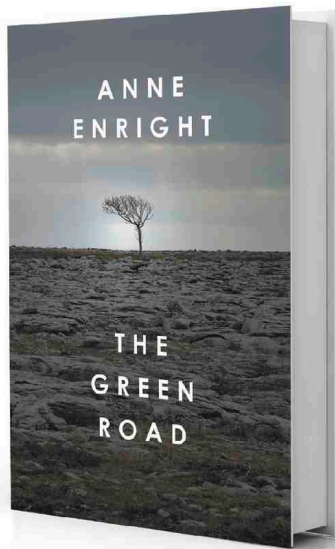
“You can’t use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have”

MAYA ANGELOU

We all know the benefits of crafting by now; increased happiness and self-esteem, reduced stress, even enhanced brainpower. But forget knitting and stuff sewing. This month, we are putting our hand to contemporary crocheting, from zigzag shoppers to lacey floral tops perfect for sunny days.

‘Learn To Crochet, Love To Crochet’ by Anna Wilkinson (Quadrille, £14.99)





BOOK OF THE MONTH

THE GREEN ROAD

by Anne Enright
(Jonathan Cape, £17.99)

The Madigan children are all unhappy in their individual ways but, as they see it, the cause of all their troubles is their mother Rosaleen: poised, impossible and always disappointed.

Enright brilliantly captures each of their characters, from the failed priest Dan reciting Yeats at a dinner party in New York, to Emmet's attempts to save the world compensating for his empty heart; from Hanna drowning her sorrows over her desultory acting career and motherhood, to Constance, perfectly named as the staunch, steadfast one, but who's about to be tested severely. And then there's dark Rosaleen, who married beneath her and has spent years 'waiting... for something that never happened'. Things come to a head when the family are reunited, and the tensions, recriminations and affections come together in one traumatic event. This is a captivating, spellbinding evocation of how your nearest and not-so-dearest can wreak emotional havoc. EF

13th

BRITAIN'S
POSITION IN THE
GLOBAL CREATIVITY
INDEX. WHEN
IT COMES TO
'LIGHTBULB
MOMENTS',
SWEDEN
WINS FIRST
PLACE.



Jade crocheted
pendant lamp,
£70, Et Aussi
at Etsy

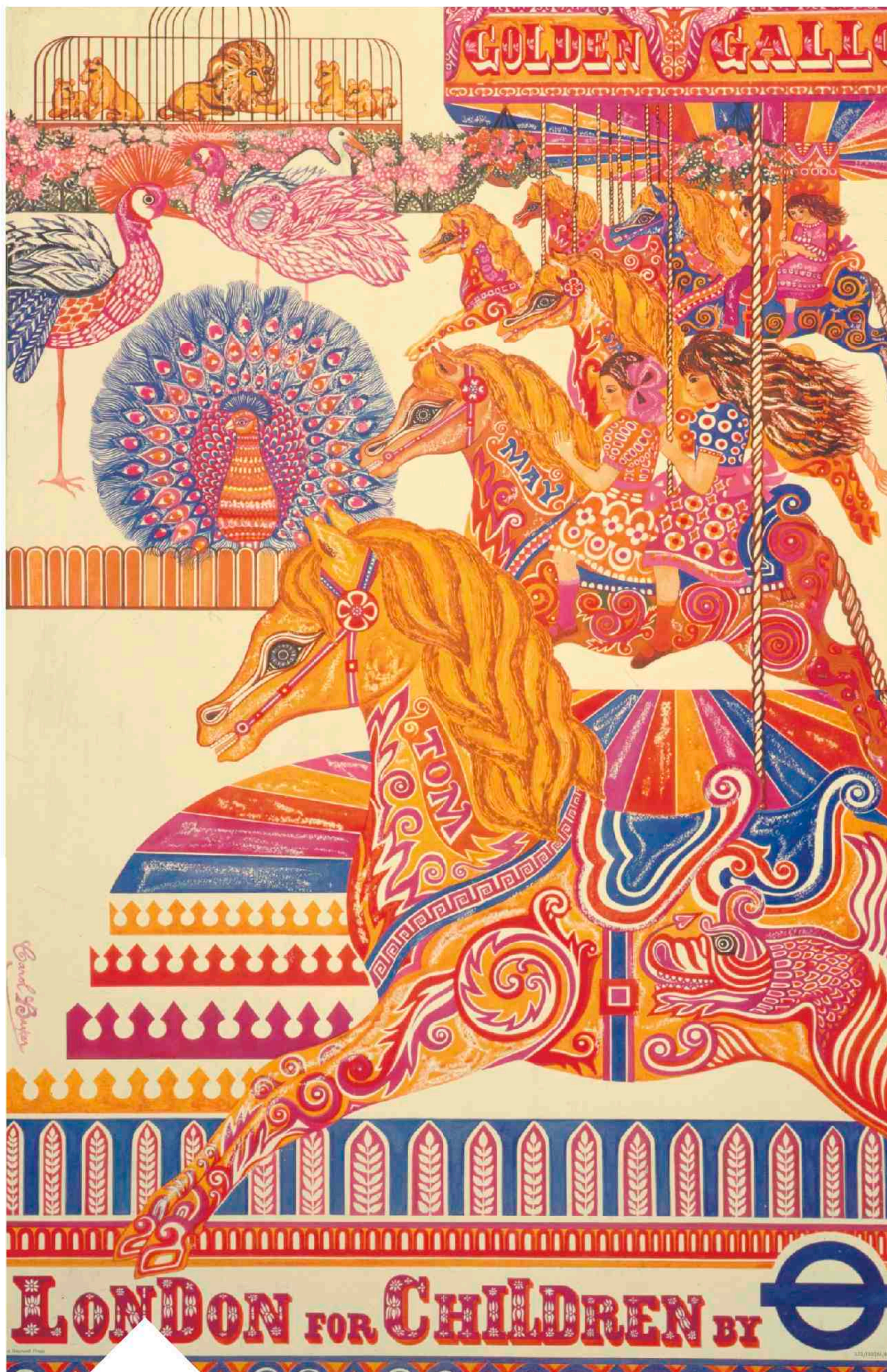
WE LOVE...

...Lake Bell's wildly authentic performance in the hilarious *Man Up*. Totally outshining her co-star Simon Pegg, Bell is fantastic as 34-year-old Nancy, who wants to take more chances in life. So when Jack (Pegg) mistakes her for his 24-year-old blind date, she rolls with it. But the truth always emerges, and with it, hilarity ensues, from sweaty fringes and awkward dancing, to a brilliant bike/taxi race through London. Bell is the kind of actress we feel inspired by, and Nancy, with all her beautiful imperfections, is a character we can all see inside of us. AR



BOOK REVIEW: EITHNE FARR, FILM REVIEW: ALI ROOF, *ALAN WIGLEY ET AL.: LAUGHTER'S INFLUENCE ON THE INTIMACY OF SELF-DISCLOSURE, HUMAN NATURE, 2015

WANT TO BUILD A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMEONE? MAKE THEM LAUGH. NEW RESEARCH EXPLAINS THAT WHEN WE WANT



CULTURE

LOOK BACK IN COLOUR

This poster called 'London For Children', promoting London transport, was designed by Carol Barker in 1973. It is part of a series of posters conceived by creative women over the last century, the first of which was commissioned in 1910. Recently on display at the London Transport Museum, the shop at the museum now stocks a huge selection of these beautiful vintage prints for you to own – perfect for adding a splash of retro colour to any wall. Semi-gloss poster, £69.95. Visit ltmuseumshop.co.uk.

WHAT KIND OF LEARNER ARE YOU?

VISUAL You are at your best when you can 'see' what you are learning. You like visual aids, graphs, drawings and symbols, and often learn by memorising where you see things.

AUDITORY You learn best by listening, to lectures or in discussions. You might remember things by saying them out loud, or memorising them to songs.

KINAESTHETIC You prefer to learn via the 'lived' experience, through moving, touching and doing – you like to explore and experiment. You will learn best by being involved in the process, whether that's visiting a museum or making notes.

Adapted from 'How To Be A Knowledge Ninja' by Graham Allcott (Icon Books, 12.99)



Pocket Stripe Notebooks,
£5.95 each,
Studio Sarah

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Wish you were more focused at work? The latest trick for better performance, diligence and more focused concentration comes in the form of taking some time out to coo over pictures of sweet things, or what the Japanese refer to as *kawaii* (a word meaning 'cute'). A Japanese study† found more attentional focus and careful behaviour in performance-based tasks after looking at pictures of super-cute animals. As if we needed an excuse...



PHOTOGRAPH: ISTOCK. *MOUNT SINAI MEDICAL CENTER. 'HAVE A SENSE OF PURPOSE IN LIFE? IT MAY PROTECT YOUR HEART', 2015. ** RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY ONEPOLL FOR DUNELM. †INITTONO ET AL., 'THE POWER OF KAWAII: VIEWING CUTE IMAGES PROMOTES A CAREFUL BEHAVIOUR AND NARROWS ATTENTIONAL FOCUS', 2012

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Born at the turn of the 20th century, Adaline suffers a freak accident at the age of 29, which freezes her body in time. As the decades roll by, she finds herself constantly running from the past, changing identity, unable to even have a close relationship with her daughter, who's now an old lady. Facing a lifetime of loneliness, Adaline finds herself swept up in nostalgia.

Imaginative, heartrending and beautifully shot, we guarantee you'll find yourself looking at your grey hairs in a whole new light by the end. **AR**

SCHOOL OF LIFE LESSONS

“Start being creative. Write a word or frame a picture... it doesn't matter what it is, or where you begin. Just start now. When you take responsibility for your own creativity, everything changes”

MICHAEL ATAVAR

Creative consultant Michael Atavar designs and runs courses on creativity at The School of Life, including a one-day intensive 'Realise Your Creative Potential' on 13 June and one-to-one coaching sessions called 'A Creative Mind' for individuals and businesses. See theschooloflife.com



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20
PER CENT
OF WOMEN
SLEEP
NAKED,
WHILE 27%
OF MEN OPT
FOR THEIR
BIRTHDAY
SUITS IN
BED*

HOW TO...

encourage healthy body image

The pressure for girls to be slim has never been greater – or started earlier. A shocking 70 per cent of seven-year-olds say they want to be thinner, reports Tanith Carey in her new book, *Girls Uninterrupted* – and a quarter of 10-year-olds have been on a diet. So how do we encourage our daughters – and ourselves – to accept our bodies?

- Don't comment on or judge women on their looks. 'Praise their strength or personalities instead,' says Carey.
- If your child is falling for the myth of celebrity perfection, seek out online images of pics pre- and post-airbrushing.
- Some reassurance is necessary. 'The women I spoke to whose parents never commented on their appearance filled the vacuum this created by assuming they were ugly,' Carey points out.
- Be an alternative voice. 'Girls are being raised in a hypercritical culture and they learn to internalise these voices,' says Carey. 'If a girl starts criticising the way she looks, suggest that she wouldn't allow anyone else to say such cruel things to her, so why would she say those things to herself?'
- 'Create your own definition of beauty by admiring women outside of the stereotype,' says Carey.
- Remind girls that women considered beautiful can find something they don't like about the way they look – the quest for perfection is a road to nowhere.
- With older girls, point out that destructive self-criticism is a way of allowing the oppression of women to happen inside her own head. 'Tell her to reject those voices,' says Carey.



READ MORE: 'GIRLS UNINTERRUPTED: STEPS FOR BUILDING STRONGER GIRLS' IS PUBLISHED BY ICON BOOKS, £7.99



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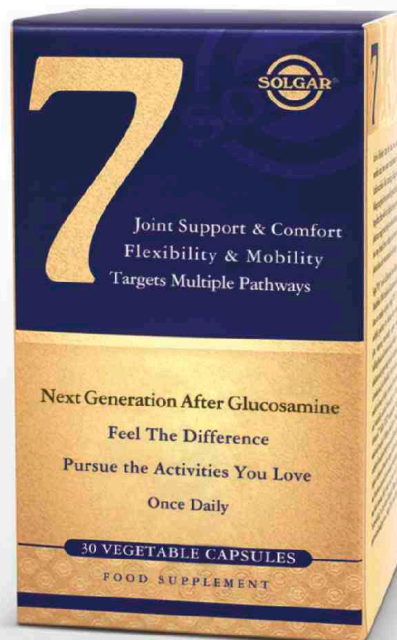
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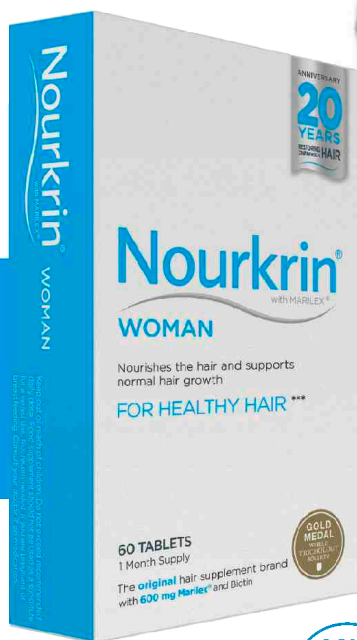


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BOOK CLUB

Through the looking glass

Danielle Woodward steps into *The Mirror World Of Melody Black*, a novel that removes the stigma of mental illness

Meet Abby, a 20-something who has been diagnosed as type two bipolar: 'I enjoy it because it's extraordinary...it's like existing in a perfect little bubble. Everything feels easy, nothing hurts. If I could live my whole life like that, I would.' She's at the heart of Gavin Extence's sensitive, witty second novel. The immediacy of his writing draws you into Abby's world, and cleverly shows how fine the line is that separates what we call 'normal' from not. As you read, everything seems stable, then, before you know it, Abby has descended into mania, and you realise that her actions are those of someone whose mental health is under threat.

When her 'perfect little bubble' bursts, Abby is admitted to a psychiatric ward where she meets Melody. Melody has 'acute unipolar depression and maybe some sort of personality disorder as well. They're still deciding. You know

what doctors are like.' Extence is convincing as a male author writing a first-person female narrator; Abby is funny, and you are on her side from the get-go. Seeing the world through her eyes and witnessing her mood changes, you understand the highs and lows of bipolar – in his author's note, Extence says he wanted to write 'something truthful' after his personal experience of mental illness.

The narrative treads the fine line between Abby's two states, with clear-cut truths peppered throughout. She says: 'Sanity... could be measured by the cleanliness of your hair, the set of your facial features, how you respond to social cues.' How many of us feel we are on the edge of that sometimes, whether we have an illness or not?

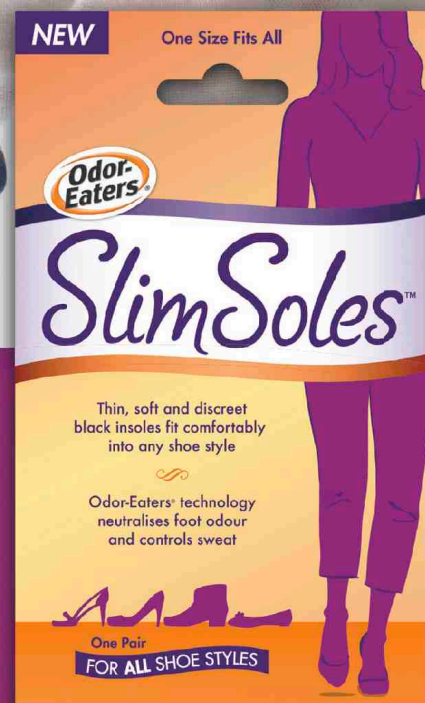
At the uplifting conclusion, you're left with the conviction that mental illness must not be stigmatised, and the hope that Abby can live her life to the full.

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STYLE

Change your stripes

In the wild, stripes are widely thought to serve the purpose of camouflage; to melt into the background and disappear. But what of the inconspicuous contrast of the wide, black and white stripes of a zebra? And why do sailors sport their famous Breton stripes? Researchers* found zebras' stripes do not help them to stay unnoticed by predators but, in the same way that the stripes on a spinning barber's pole appear to twist upward, the contrasting stripes give confusing movement signals that could help a predator misjudge their timing of attack. The Breton stripes on a sailor uniform were originally used to help easily spot a sailor thrown overboard amid the waves. Likewise, in our own uniforms, this season's stripes are not for fading into the background, but attracting attention, creating illusions and standing out from the crowd.

Be inspired



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'THE STRIPES OF A TIGER ARE ON THE OUTSIDE; THE STRIPES OF A MAN LIE INSIDE' **BHUTANESE PROVERB**

CAREY MULLIGAN

In her role as Bathsheba Everdene in *Far From The Madding Crowd*, Carey Mulligan has charmed us once again. Here, we learn how she went from drama school reject to award-winning Hollywood actress

WORDS NATALIE DENTON PHOTOGRAPHS LORENZO AGIUS/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

On-screen she's played gritty, edgy and honest characters – a suicidal sister with brotherly love issues (*Shame*), a depressed housewife (*Drive*) and a crass, self-absorbed folk singer (*Inside Llewyn Davis*) to name a few – and we have loved her for being able to portray our collective dark side so beautifully. Once again, in her most recent role, 29-year-old Carey Mulligan has won the hearts of the *Psychologies* team, playing the iconic, feisty, feminist-for-her-time heroine Bathsheba Everdene in *Far From The Madding Crowd*.

Oscar-nominee Thomas Vinterberg's directorial take on one of the greatest love stories ever told is the fourth big-screen adaptation of Thomas Hardy's classic novel. Set in the Victorian Dorset countryside, Mulligan takes the lead role as a rebellious >>>

“MY PARENTS
WANTED ME TO
GET A PROPER
EDUCATION”



>>> farm-owner who attracts the attention of three very different suitors, played by Matthias Schoenaerts, Michael Sheen and Tom Sturridge – the latter one of Mulligan's real-life friends.

It's a wonderful film; the *Psychologies* team wept, applauded and swooned our way through it. There is a particular hole that only a period drama can fill. When we want to feel safe, reassured and nostalgic, we turn to crinoline and crumpets. And in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, you do get an abundance of breathtaking Dorset landscapes and corseted dresses – and even a breakfast scene complete with crumpets and china. But beware – this is Hardy, and breakfast is liable to be spoiled by a dissolute husband. With knockout performances from Mulligan and her paramours, we loved the edge-of-seat drama, groaned at (and identified with) the blindness of an almost-modern heroine and even got a final bit of proper period drama relief when, with her defences down, the girl finally gets the right (gorgeous) guy.

Finding her voice

This isn't the first time the actress has helped to export the character of a book onto the silver screen, but she admits to not always brushing up on the reading material before filming begins. 'I've read half of *Pride and Prejudice*,' she reveals. '*Never Let Me Go* was, and still is, one of my favourite books. Sometimes it is just happenstance; *Drive* is based on a novel, but it's very different from what we ended up making in the film; it was inspired by, but not necessarily based on, and so there, the book wasn't so much of an influence.'

Set for release on 1 May, *Far From The Madding Crowd*'s trailer features the song 'Let No Man Steal Your Thyme' performed by both Carey and Michael Sheen, but this won't be the first time we've heard her serenade audiences, as she bravely took to the microphone in both *Shame* and *Inside Llewyn Davis*, where she accompanied Justin Timberlake. 'Justin did everything he could to make me feel more at ease when I had to sing. He was really helpful on the set and that made it much less painful. I'll never be a singer, and singing still terrifies me, even though I can fake it. At least I was able to spend some time in the studio with Justin working with [music producer] T Bone Burnett for a month, so by the time I had to sing in front of the camera it was less of an ordeal,' she says.

'Singing in *Shame* was much more stressful because I had to do it in one take and the camera was directly in front of me. Also, the director, Steve McQueen, wanted

“EVERY SINGLE DRAMA SCHOOL REJECTED ME, I WAS CRUSHED – ALL MY AUDITIONS WENT HORRIBLY WRONG”

it all live. That made it a much more emotional kind of performance whereas in *Llewyn*, we were mimicking folk-singers of the time so it was more light-hearted. Singing is still not my thing, though. I've always been nervous singing in front of people and I don't think that's ever going to change.'

Home matters

In the past, the London-born actress has admitted her reluctance to method-act and, thankfully, for the role of Bathsheba Everdene, she didn't have to dig deep to channel her character's love for all things rural; she has openly confessed to being smitten with provincial living, as she and husband Marcus Mumford (lead singer of Mumford & Sons), live on a Devonshire farm. The couple, who are notoriously private, first met as children at a Christian holiday camp and, despite losing touch in their youth, reconnected as adults. Mulligan and Mumford, who also worked on the soundtrack for *Inside Llewyn Davis*, took their vows in April 2012 shortly after filming wrapped up on the folk-centric comedy-drama, and now live a quiet life away from the paparazzi circus – when their careers allow it.

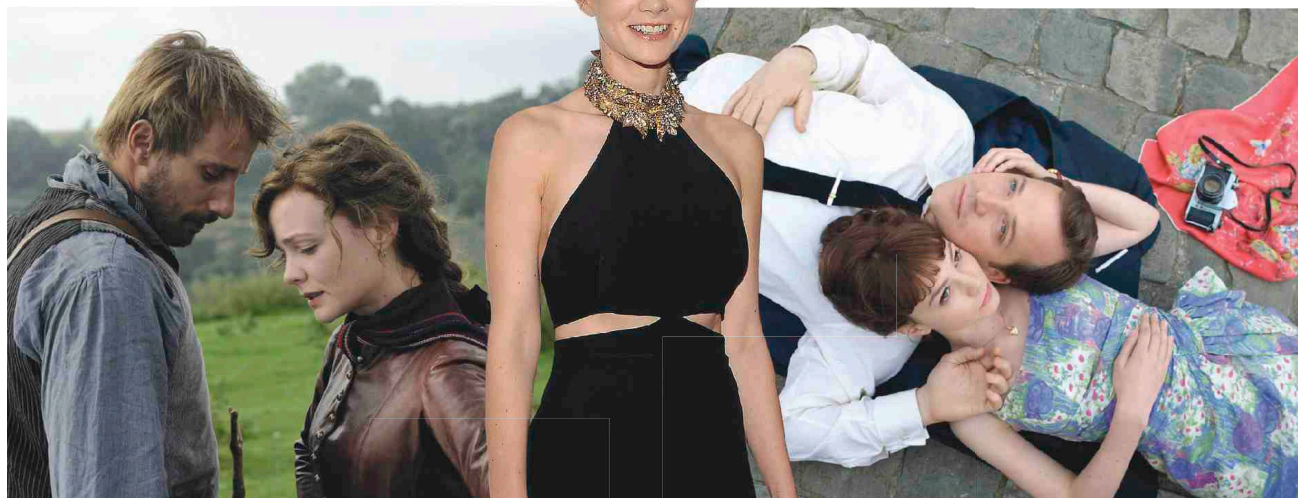
THE FILM

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

Based on Thomas Hardy's classic novel, the film tells the story of independent Bathsheba Everdene (Mulligan), who attracts three suitors: Gabriel Oak (Matthias Schoenaerts), a sheep farmer, captivated by her boldness; Frank Troy (Tom Sturridge), a reckless sergeant; and William Boldwood (Michael Sheen), a rich land-owner. Bathsheba's choices explore the nature of relationships and love, and the human ability to overcome hardships through resilience and perseverance. We loved it.

Around the world

Far from being the product of pushy parents, Mulligan's journey to Hollywood was the result of her own self-belief, determination and tenacity. Brought up in a middle-class family, Mulligan's father, a Liverpudlian of Irish descent, was a hotel manager, and her Welsh mother, a university lecturer. It was from them that she inherited her strong work ethic. Mulligan and her older brother Owain, enjoyed a less-than-ordinary but nevertheless exciting childhood, due to their father's job – moving abroad and living in a variety of hotels. 'Overall, it was kind of great; we had pretty much free rein. My brother and I would run



Carey as heroine Bathsheba, with Matthias Schoenaerts in *Far From The Madding Crowd*

Starring in *An Education* with Peter Sarsgaard in 2009, for which she won a BAFTA



Playing the iconic Daisy with Leonardo DiCaprio and Tobey Maguire in *The Great Gatsby* in 2013

Her breakthrough role as Kitty in *Pride & Prejudice*, in 2005, with Keira Knightley and Brenda Blethyn

around the hotels and go into rooms after guests had checked out to see if they left anything. We were terrible! Once, I found a Swiss army knife and I shut it on my finger. We never went into guest rooms after that! We were expected to behave properly and we were friendly with the maids and the hotel staff; we felt like we were part of the team. The best part was eating Wiener schnitzel from room service.'

Inspired by acting

From the ages of three to eight, Mulligan lived with her family in Germany, where she and her brother attended the International School of Düsseldorf, and it was here that she first fell in love with acting. 'Acting has been my obsession for as long as I can remember. It was all pretty clear to me when I saw my brother perform in *The King and I* in Düsseldorf, where my father was managing a hotel. I was six at the time

and I can still recall being transported by the experience of it and wanting to be part of it. I begged my parents to send me to theatre school, but they wanted me to get a proper education,' she says. 'They wanted me to get a university degree in case something went horribly wrong. They were scared for me. But I thought if I went to university, I'd spend three years doing something I don't care about, or I'll drop out and that'll be even worse because I'll have wasted everyone's time and money. It's hard when you're 18 to decide to do something exclusively for three years. A lot of my friends did it and they did it for the university experience, so maybe I missed out on that, but there was nothing else I could do. Acting was it.'

Despite being a church-going, self-confessed 'goody-goody' and academically bright student, who scored eight A-star GCSEs, she defied her parents' wishes aged 17, in a one-off rebellious moment that would set her life on a more >>>



“I JUST WANTED TO EARN MY LIVING ACTING – NOW I’M LIVING THIS INCREDIBLE DREAM”

>>>vocational path. ‘I was very angry at them for being so against it [my acting ambition], but we just had no example of anyone in our life who was in that kind of world. My parents ran hotels, and my brother was very academic and went to Oxford,’ she reveals. ‘I was quite academic until I was about 14 and then I went to boarding school where I had the opportunity to continue to be academic, but I became less interested in it and got more involved in acting. Then, when I was applying for universities, I used a couple of places on my UCAS form to apply for drama school without telling anyone!’

‘Every single drama school rejected me and I was crushed – all my auditions went horribly wrong. So I went to work nights as a barmaid at a pub. That experience gave me the chance to observe and study all the strange characters who came to the pub, especially some of the older men who wanted to pick me up even though I looked like I was 12.’

Everything changes

Her lucky break actually happened at school. ‘Julian Fellowes came to speak at my school about the making of *Gosford Park*. Since he was the only person I had ever met who was in the business I decided to write him a letter asking for advice, and he and his wife invited me out for dinner and arranged a meeting with a casting agent, Maggie Lunn. She was able to get me an audition for *Pride & Prejudice* and, a few months later, I was on the set with Keira Knightley, Rosamund Pike, and Judi Dench, with whom I had always dreamed of working. There I was! I couldn’t believe my luck.’

With the wheels of fate firmly in motion, she quickly followed up her film début in 2005 with her baptism in TV, taking on the role of orphan Ada Clare in the BAFTA-winning *Bleak House*, and two years later, won critical acclaim during her Broadway debut in Chekhov’s *The Seagull*. Carey’s breakthrough moment came with her 2009 performance in *An Education*, for which she received an Academy Award nomination and won the BAFTA for Best Actress in a Leading Role. A series of strong roles led to two films in one year: *The Great Gatsby* and *Inside Llewyn Davis* in 2013. ‘To get to work with Baz (Luhrmann) and the Coen brothers in the same year was amazing,’ Carey says, reflecting on her career so far. ‘I have “pinch me” moments constantly. At a certain point, you have

to acknowledge how bizarre it is to be in a film with Leonardo DiCaprio who’s the actor you grew up watching in movies. I saw him in *Romeo + Juliet* when I was 15 and thought it was the best movie I’d ever seen, so acting with him was surreal. It was a heightened experience being in that place.’

Proving she’s not one to let Hollywood go to her head, Mulligan is very grounded and humble – and uses her fame to highlight causes close to her heart, most notably acting as an ambassador for War Child and a cause closer to home; the Alzheimer’s Society, for which she even donned her trainers and competed in the 2013 Nike Run To The Beat half marathon in London. ‘My grandma has suffered from dementia for many years. I first remember her forgetting things when I was around 15 or 16 and I was sad, because she had always been interested in what I was doing. Now she’s being looked after at a wonderful home in Wales and I’m doing my best to raise awareness and raise money to treat the illness and find a cure. There are 800,000 people in the UK who suffer from dementia and virtually everyone knows someone or has a family member who has been afflicted with it. It’s important and meaningful for me to be able to do my part to help this cause.’

On the horizon

Unlike others in her field, this frequently nominated and awarded actress often takes time out to wait for only challenging roles, and it appears that her next big picture, following *Far From The Madding Crowd*, is exactly that. Planned for release this September, *Suffragette* shines a light on the foot-soldiers of the early feminist movement in the late 19th and early 20th century. Mulligan fronts the film as Maud, a radical revolutionary willing to risk it all to win women’s right to vote, starring alongside Helena Bonham Carter and Meryl Streep. *Suffragette* screenwriter Abi Morgan has said she created the role of Maud specifically for Mulligan, after being impressed by her raw and authentic performance in *Shame*.

And it’s not just on-screen where Mulligan likes to prove her credibility. Treading the boards is something most actors try at some point, but Mulligan has peppered her CV repeatedly with turns on stage, most recently joining Bill Nighy and Matthew Beard in *Skylight*. After enjoying rave reviews in London’s West End, the entire production and cast have moved to New York’s Broadway to open this month. ‘I’m still exhilarated by the experience of acting with immensely talented people, many of whom I’ve grown up admiring,’ Mulligan says. ‘I started out simply wanting to be able to earn my living acting, and now I feel like I’m living this incredible dream. I never expected this and I never had any grand aspirations beyond finding the next job, so all of this has been an extraordinary journey for me.’

Far From The Madding Crowd is released in UK and Irish cinemas on 1 May

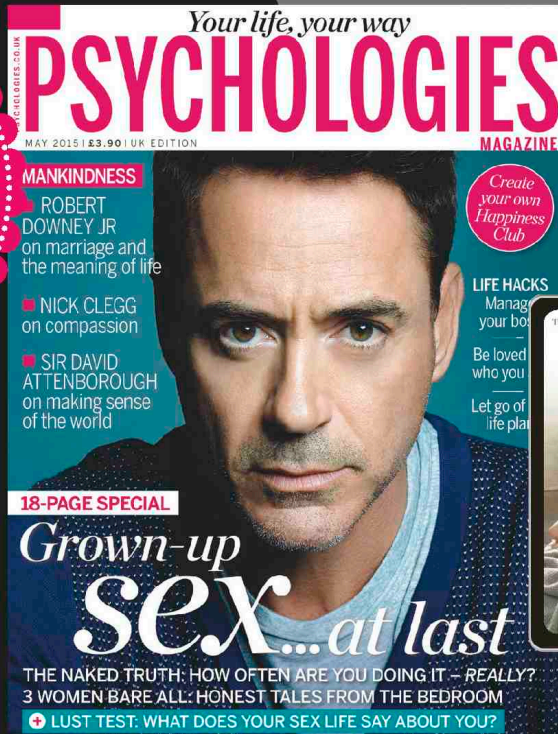
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MIND

Why politics will make you happy

Every month, **Martha Roberts** invites you to road-test research around feeling good

1 THE PROJECT

Many people shy away from getting involved in politics, but studies suggest that political engagement can help us lead a happier life.

2 THE AIM

Incorporate politics into your life – it could make you happier by increasing your connectedness to other people.

3 THE THEORY

Being politically involved was one of the factors noted in the World Happiness Database as being beneficial for increasing happiness. This is also something Chris Barker and Brian Martin found in a recent study* – that participation in families, workplaces and political systems increases happiness levels by helping us to build and maintain social relationships. People feel they are undergoing self-improvement and exercising their participatory skills (what the authors call ‘citizen flow’), thereby bolstering happiness levels.

You don’t have to run for office. It can manifest itself in various forms – doing jury service, attending council meetings, organising an online petition or supporting a campaigning organisation. There’s strong evidence that happy people participate more in democratic processes, so it would seem a virtuous circle exists in relation to happiness and politics – being politically involved makes you happier, and happier people get more politically involved than those who are unhappy.



TRY IT OUT

- **Don't be defeated before you start.** Political involvement doesn't have to be time-consuming or high-powered. It's fine to 'think small'. What you do on a small basis can make a difference to your immediate world and make you feel content through increased interaction.
- **Seek out kindred spirits.** Whether it's mental health, green issues or animal rights, there's probably an organisation out there that feels as passionately as you do. The 'Get involved' section on a charity's website, for example, will give you ideas.
- **Have the courage to be a lone wolf.** It may be that your political passion is so niche that there isn't a group to represent it. Perhaps this is the time to consider going it alone.
- **Familiarise yourself with vehicles for change.** Whether it's through social media or putting up a poster in a local café, there are many ways you can spark political interest in other people.

MARTHA ROBERTS is an award-winning UK health writer and mental health blogger at mentalhealthwise.com

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The art of asking

[SELF] Research shows that learning to ask for help can do wonders for our wellbeing. Self-confessed asking-phobic **Katy Regan** decides it is time to change





Confession: I hate asking for stuff; I hate asking for people's time, for money, for favours or babysitters or lifts. Most importantly, and perhaps tellingly, I hate asking for emotional help. I could count on one hand the number of times I've called a friend in tears and asked for advice, or even just a soothing ear.

And yet I've lost count of the number of times I've answered such calls. With the exception of one or two emotional vampires, I've been delighted to help, and flattered that they thought they could count on me – so why doesn't it work the other way round?

When your allergy to asking only affects you, that's one thing. When it also affects those you love, maybe you need to take a look at it. My car died a few weeks ago and, rather than ask people for a lift to school, I made my 10-year-old walk the half-hour journey in what he described as 'Arctic conditions' – he's so dramatic! 'Just ask someone,' he cried in despair.

Asking around (do you see what I did there?), it seems I am not alone in my aversion. It appears the world is divided into askers and non-askers. My friend Alison, a single mum, would 'rather die' than ask her parents for money (I doubt it would come to that but you get my drift) and yet, if asking is an art, my friend Jenny could win the Turner Prize. She asks for emotional support if she's feeling down, and she calls in favours to get ahead in her career. But far from coming across as a 'taker', for the 'askee' (that is, me/her friends), it has the opposite effect. It makes you feel closer to her; trusted by

her. It feels like she's giving, by asking, probably because of the way she asks: graciously, charmingly and always with readiness to reciprocate.

I don't want to be a bother...

So what makes some people find it easy to ask and others, like me, baulk at the very idea? Psychologist Corinne Sweet believes it's down to your upbringing. 'If you come from a background where you are punished for asking, you're left with a feeling that it's bad,' she says. 'Children who have been forced into premature self-sufficiency – say if their

“Maybe what stops us is the fear of being a burdensome member of the community instead of a productive one”

parents were always very busy – or belittled for being needy, also find it hard. It's down to a fear of being vulnerable. That British “stiff upper lip”.

Growing up, my parents weren't so much stiff upper lip as classic northern folk, I suppose: the subliminal message being 'don't bother people'. There wasn't really a culture of 'reaching out'.

Amanda Palmer, singer and pianist with American rock band The Dresden Dolls and author of a new book, *The Art Of Asking* (part-memoir about how learning to ask changed her life and part-manifesto about the powers of asking and giving) was also, once, chronically ask-averse. 'Growing up, I >>>



>>> was absolutely allergic to looking like I needed attention or love,' she tells me. 'I was paranoid of being labelled an attention-seeker, and I entered into very destructive, commitment-phobic relationship patterns, because I had such a hard time asking for intimacy.'

Things changed when, wanting to fund her music, she began working as a street statue dubbed 'The Eight-Foot Bride' for which she donned a bridal gown, painted herself white and stood still on a box on the streets of Boston, looking directly into the eyes of passers-by; people would give her a dollar for a moment of human interaction. It turned out to be an education in the art of asking and more importantly, in 'being human'.

'There's something about standing on a box as an eight-foot-tall bride that

“Let other people decide what you deserve. It's not for you to make that call”

means you're at the mercy of humanity and you learn so much,' she says. 'In particular, that direct connection (the eye contact, the flower she offered people who stopped), comes from asking, and vice-versa. It's about *seeing* people – different, she points out, to just *looking* at people. 'When people feel “seen” and connected, they want to help you, because they care about you.' This is probably why people want to help my aforementioned friend Jenny, because she lets people in.

Palmer believes that asking is the

fundamental building block of any relationship. 'We ask in order to build and maintain relationships with one another. Will you help me? Can I trust you? Are you going to screw me over? And ultimately, do you love me?'

Her realisation, while dressed as The Eight-Foot Bride, that actually, people *want* to give, led to her starting a crowd-funding campaign on Kickstarter to finance her next album. Over 25,000 fans donated, and she made \$1.2m – at the time, the most funds ever raised for a musical project on Kickstarter.

Back to me and my aversion. In order to cure myself, I need to know where it comes from and Palmer hits the nail on the head: 'From what I've seen, it's not so much the *act* of asking for help that paralyses us – it's what lies beneath,' she says. 'Vulnerability, yes,

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES; POST, SG; ALTRUISM, HAPPINESS, AND HEALTH: IT'S GOOD TO BE GOOD; INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE, 2005; MIDLARSKY, E; 'HELPING AS COPING' PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR: REVIEW OF PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY, 1991

but also the fear of being a burdensome member of the community instead of a productive one.' That word 'burden' struck a chord. It wasn't necessarily a fear of being vulnerable that was stopping me asking (I am a chronic over-sharer in other ways), but I realise that I hate to 'put on' people.

A two-way thing

What I hadn't considered, however, was how this might make other people feel. I assume I'm doing people a service by not asking them for help, but Sweet opened my eyes: 'When we like someone, we *want* to give to them, but if you're someone who doesn't accept what they're giving, or never asks for it, people can end up feeling hurt and frustrated that they're not allowed in; that your relationship is not two-way.'

People who find it hard to ask for things, adds Sweet, usually find it easy to give. So you have a situation where you're constantly giving, but don't accept things in return, which is as hurtful as not giving in the first place. Something, when I think about it, I've been on the receiving end of – and she's right, it doesn't feel good. A recent situation also springs to mind: I organised a party and didn't invite certain people who lived too far away as I assumed they wouldn't bother coming all that way just for me – only for them to end up hurt that I didn't even ask. The reason? I felt undeserving of the effort they'd have to make. 'This is common,' says Palmer, 'but let other people decide what you deserve. It's not for you to make that call.'

Scientific studies* show that when you allow other people to give to you, it increases life-satisfaction for others, provides a sense of meaning, increases feelings of competence, improves mood and even reduces stress. So allowing others to help you is actually doing them a huge favour! I was ready to start asking and this couldn't have come at a

better time: I'm currently at a sort of impasse in my life. I'm trying to change my career, sort out my finances, meet someone... I need to ask for help! When I start, however (in particular, asking contacts if they can help me get work), my tone is something like this: 'Help! I'm skint! I'm trying to change careers but nobody can see past my CV – can you help? I'll do anything!'

I exaggerate for comic effect, but you get the picture: I'm begging rather than asking. Palmer explains the difference: 'Asking is like a courtship. Begging, you're already naked and panting. Asking is an act of intimacy and trust; begging is desperation. When you ask in the right way, you have to fully accept "no" as a possibility. If you've ever been in the situation of being asked when the asker won't accept 'no', it's a very uncomfortable feeling.' (Yes!)

I try a different tack. I have no car – cue a funny email about how I broke down on the M1 on way to my parents to 'get away from it all'... it would be amazing if you could help! People are amused; they're flattered I've asked, and more than happy to help. Why have I underestimated people so much?

No shame

In *The Art Of Asking*, Palmer stresses how asking without shame like this is so important. 'It's not only unnecessary to act shame-ridden and apologetic, it's counter-productive,' she says. 'Shame pollutes an environment of asking and giving that thrives on trust and openness. As American politician Tip O'Neill once said, 'If you want to make someone your friend, ask them for a favour.'

'There is an emotional currency that we need to plug into,' she continues, 'and it's learning to ask and to give. If we approached life with the double attitude of being able to ask and feel gratitude, we'd be far less depressed and closer to others. It would give us a greater sense of being part of humanity.'

THE ART OF ASKING: DOS AND DON'TS

Do...

Try 'Maximum DIY'. With this, the emphasis is on collectivism – you throw the problem out to circles and see what solutions come back. 'Minimum DIY' is when you try and do everything yourself – usually a recipe for resentment.

Trust the person you're asking. 'When you accept someone's offer of food, money or love, you have to trust the help offered,' says Amanda Palmer. Don't go in the door with your guard up.

Ask your partner for what you need. Corinne Sweet believes that this is the basis of a loving, healthy relationship: 'Most of us think the other person should read our minds, but it's impossible; you have to ask for what you need and expect the other person to do the same.'

Don't...

Ask with shame. Asking with shame says, 'You have the power over me,' whereas asking with condescension says, 'I have the power over you'. What you want is asking with gratitude, which says, 'We have the power to help each other.'

Point score. 'She asked me for this so now it's my turn to ask'. The universe doesn't work like that.

Forget gratitude. In this particular emotional currency, it has the highest value.

'The Mindfulness Journal' by Corinne Sweet, (Pan Macmillan, £9.99) is out now. For more information on her work, see corinnesweet.com. 'The Art Of Asking' by Amanda Palmer (Piatkus, £13.99) is out now. See amandapalmer.net

HOW TO LOOK LIKE YOURSELF

“The better I feel, the less I dwell on what others think”

Our resident image expert Mandy Lehto talks to musician Hattie Briggs about dressing to be happy and using music as a muse

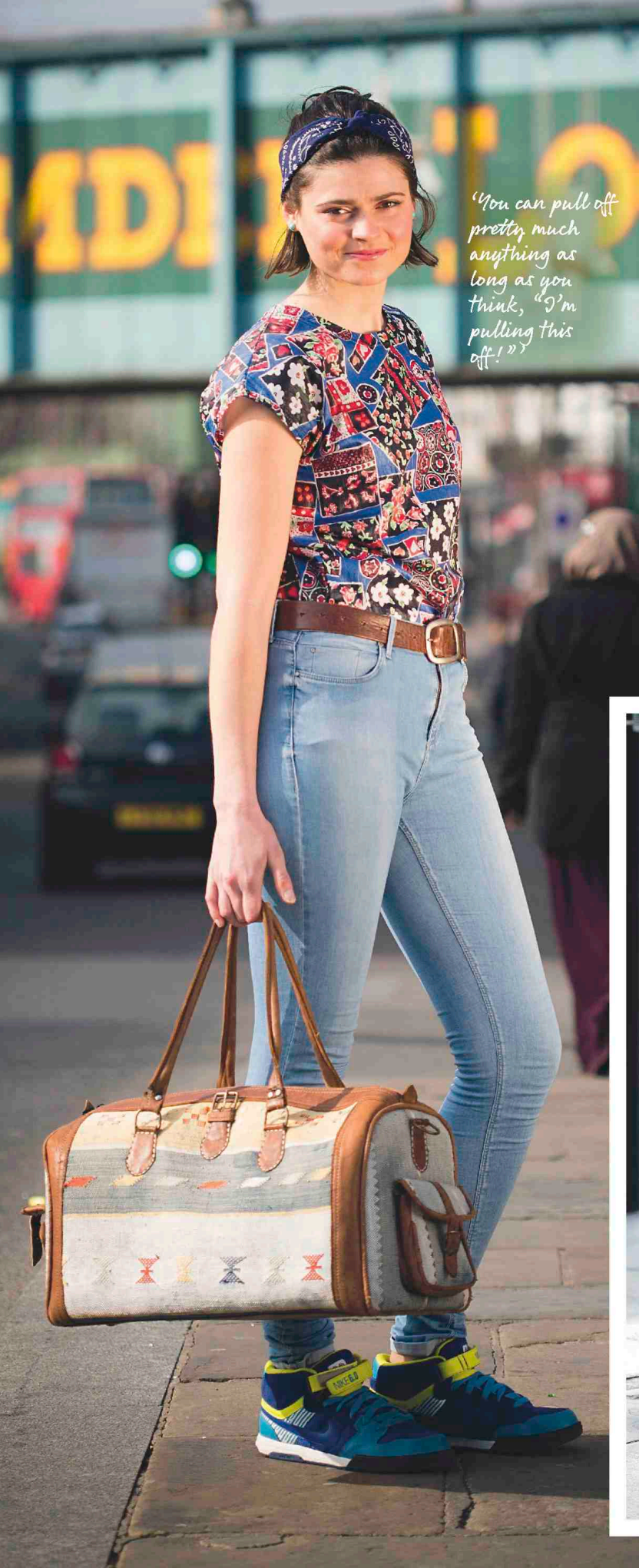
PHOTOGRAPHS KI PRICE

Hattie Briggs, 21, dropped out of her Russian language course at university to pursue her passion of singing and songwriting. Last year, she was nominated for the Radio 2 Young Folk Award. Hattie describes her music as a mix of mature pop and catchy melody. ‘It’s fairly relaxed and quite personal,’ she says. I ask if the same is true of her style. ‘My style is a blend, like my music. I have a lot of individual pieces with a distinctive feel – retro, vintage, folksy, sporty, modern. I like to mix subtle pieces with something off-the-wall.’ Music is her muse. There are parallels between songwriting and dressing – both are creative pursuits. ‘Writing songs has made me more authentic, as it’s so personal,’ she says. ‘As I’ve pursued my music, I’ve become more daring in what I wear. The better I feel, the less I dwell on what others think. That gives me creative freedom.’

While there’s no formula to Hattie’s look, she admits to a few style staples. ‘I’m obsessed with jackets. They can take a casual outfit from scruffy to cool. I love hats and headscarves, too.’ She got into wearing them while growing her hair in that awkward, in-between stage. ‘Now I wear them all the time. A headscarf changes the whole feel of an outfit.’ She often constructs outfits around high-waisted jeans (‘so flattering on long legs’) and flat shoes or boots. ‘I am 5’11 and have size 9 feet, so I’m not into heels.’ The more she performs, the more aware she has become of what looks and feels right. ‘Until recently, I was trying to find my style, and mostly dressed in baggy hoody tops and low-slung jeans. My only aim was to hide my bad bits. I just didn’t “get” clothes at all.’

Hattie was a tomboy growing up. ‘I’m sporty and came into wearing feminine clothes very late.’ This has infused her look with an interesting twist. She has never been into make-up or accessories either. ‘I keep things simple, and add lots of colour,’ she says. ‘I mix up bright pieces, and let colour do the talking.’ Bright and casual, that’s how she sums up her look. ‘And happy!’ she adds. ‘I’m quite a happy person and dressing is such a treat. It’s something I look forward to every morning.’

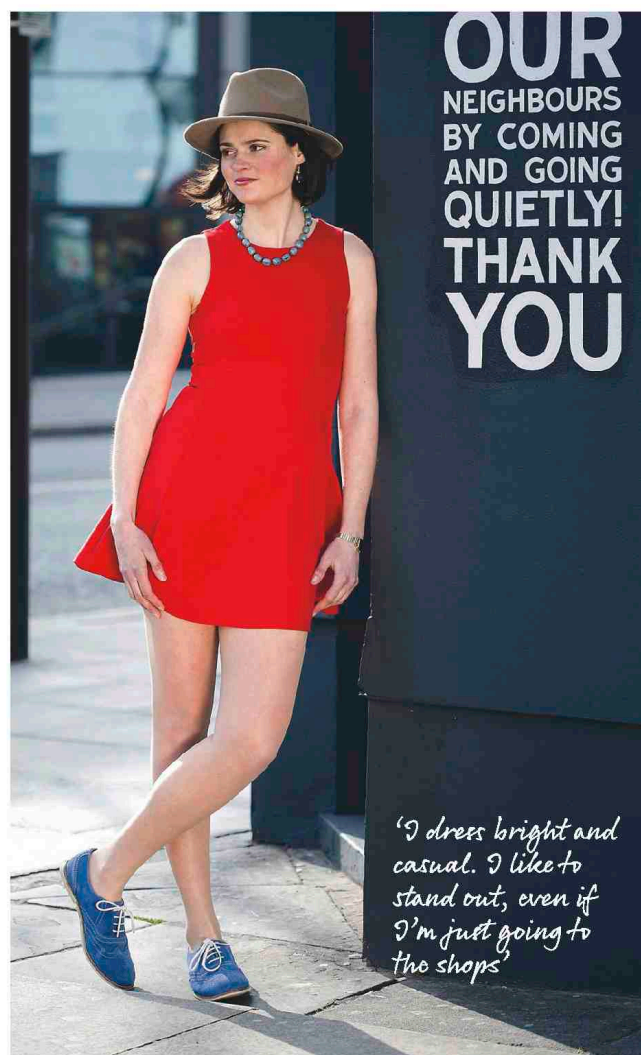




'You can pull off pretty much anything as long as you think, "I'm pulling this off!"'

How to let go of the rules

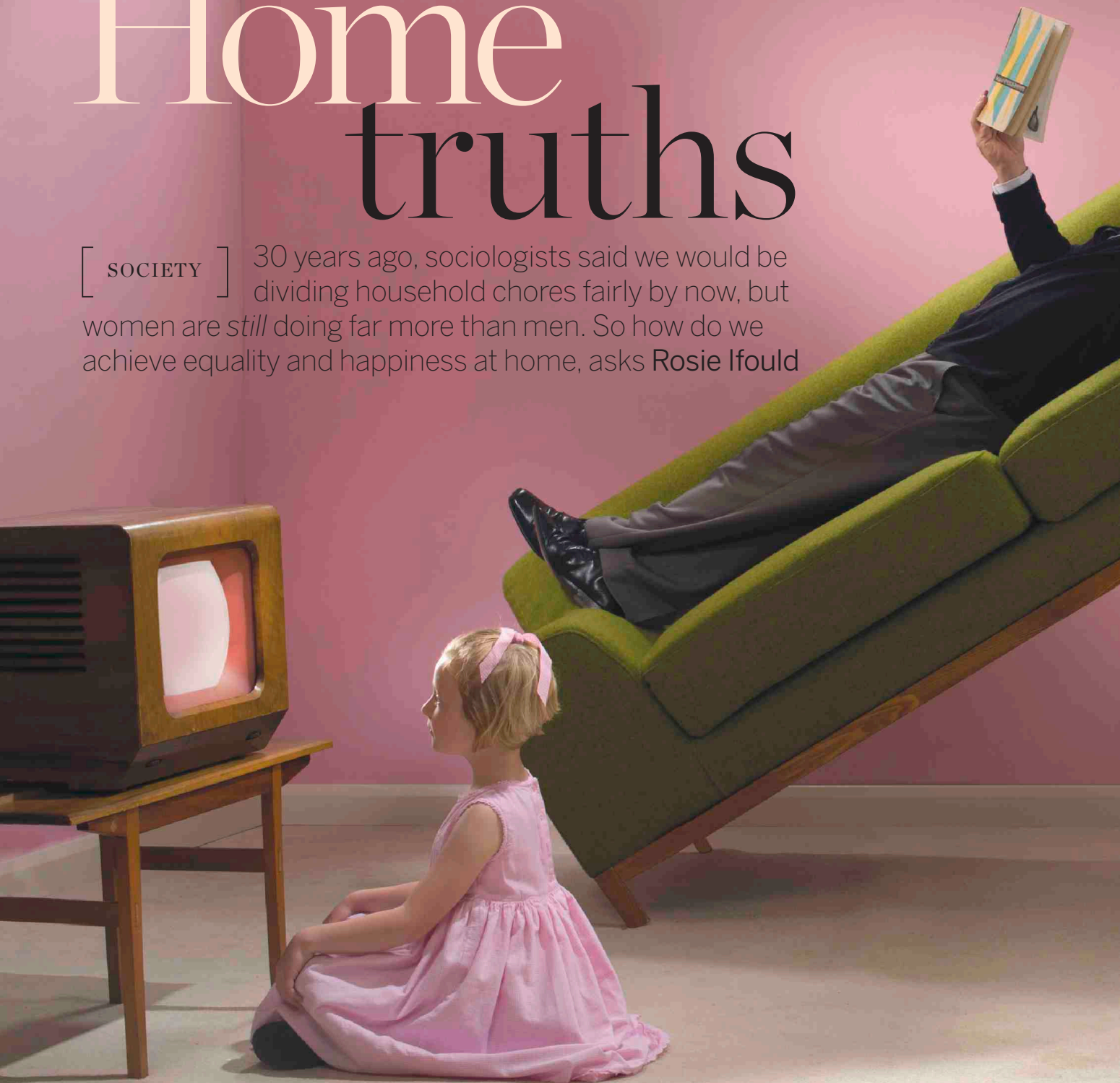
- Pair a jacket with jeans to upscale a casual look
- Not into accessories? A great belt can be enough
- Embrace challenges (like in-between-length hair) to find new style options
- Try a headscarf – watch an online tutorial and have a go!
- Play with ditzy patterns and checks



'I dress bright and casual. I like to stand out, even if I'm just going to the shops'

Home truths

[SOCIETY] 30 years ago, sociologists said we would be dividing household chores fairly by now, but women are *still* doing far more than men. So how do we achieve equality and happiness at home, asks **Rosie Ifould**





Does the following strike a chord? 'The crisis point was a bag of socks,' says Anna, 37. 'My husband has a blind spot about putting away his laundry; he used to leave it hanging on airers for weeks. I got so sick of asking him to clear it that I put all his clean socks in a carrier bag and dumped it on his side of the bedroom, thinking he'd be forced

to put them away. Instead, he just started taking socks from the bag. And it took nearly three months for that bag to disappear from the room. It's funny now, but that bag nearly broke our relationship.'

Anna realised that, although she and her husband had an equal partnership before they moved in together, slowly things had changed. She'd become the one who changed the sheets, cleaned and did the >>>

>>> shopping. 'I began to think, "why me?"' she says. 'We were both working full time, earning roughly the same, so why was I the one rushing home to shop or cook? What did it say about our relationship that he hadn't even noticed?'

Thirty years ago, sociologists were predicting that by 2015, we'd have gender-equality at home. So why don't we? Dr Jenny van Hooff, a sociologist from Manchester Metropolitan University, and author of *Modern Couples?* (Ashgate) studied the domestic arrangements of dual-earner couples without children – the kind you'd expect to have a more equal distribution of household chores. She found that in all but one pair, women were still doing most of it. 'Even when men were doing housework, they were often acting as helpers.'

When I asked friends about their set-up, an overwhelming number of women replied to say that yes, their husband vacuumed or was a whizz with the iron. 'I'm so lucky, he's so good,' they said – and fair play to them, but imagine that statement reversed? Yes, there are a few exceptions to the rule but, by and large, it's still women who are – literally – carrying the load.

I tried out the BBC's Chore Wars online calculator, created for Radio 4's *Woman's Hour*. I put in rough estimates for how much time my partner and I spend on domestics each week, including DIY, admin, food-shopping and childcare, as well as the number of hours each of us spend on paid work. I knew I'd come out ahead, but seeing the difference was an eye-opener. I spend 58 hours working a week, compared to my partner's 47. He gets 11 hours more free time every week, *and* earns twice as much. I feel like I've been scammed – but I'm not sure exactly who is responsible for scamming me.

There was a couple in van Hooff's study who bucked the trend – what was different about them? I asked her. 'It was him.' The man had been the one who insisted on doing his fair share, van

HOW DO YOU *REALLY* FEEL ABOUT HOUSEWORK?

- How was love shown in the house you grew up in?
- What did a clean house represent to your mother?
- What did a clean house represent to your father?
- Does your partner ever ask you to do something around the house? How do you react?
- What would it feel like to live in a dirty house?
- Who would you be most ashamed to invite over if your house was messy? Why? What does that person represent?
- Who do you know who is particularly houseproud? Would you like to be more like them? How do you feel about the rest of their lives?

Hooff said. 'A woman can decide she wants an equal relationship, but it won't have much effect unless her partner wants one, too.' In many cases, she added, when she asked men about housework, they were bemused. 'They thought it was a nothing subject; it was so inconsequential to them.'

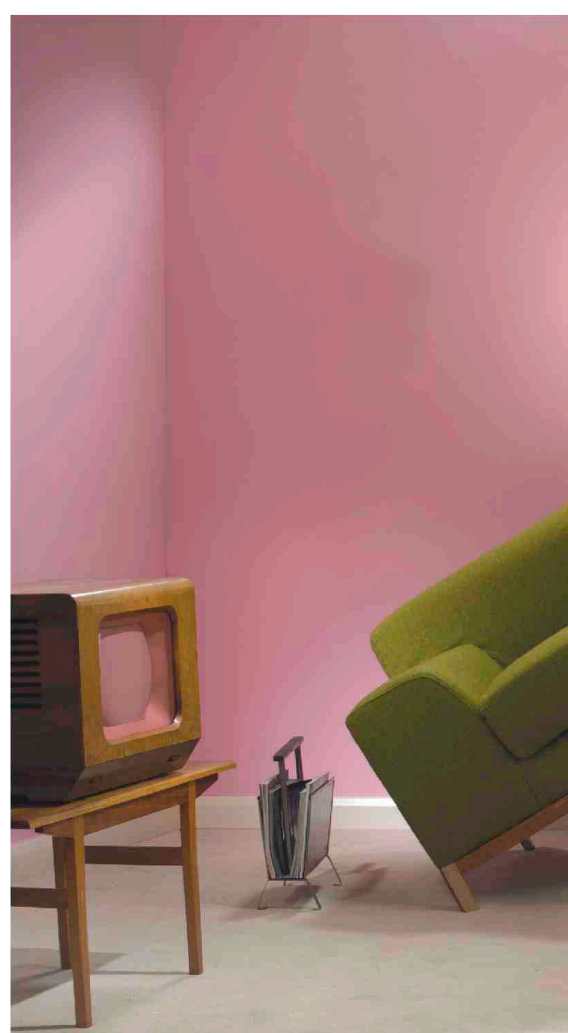
This, of course, means change needs to be fought for – with women having to do the work here, too.

How women see it

Van Hooff found an interesting pattern in the way women she interviewed talked about their domestic role. 'Instead of challenging the status quo, they were creating what we call cover stories to excuse issues or make them fit with their modern ideals. So, they might say they had higher standards, or they liked things done a certain way. Or that it was only fair because the men worked longer hours.'

For some women, taking on the bulk of the housework is a signal of affection. 'Women are socialised to think of it as an expression of care and love,' points out van Hooff. For others, it's about power. 'Whenever we have an argument, my final line is always something like "you don't even know where we keep our sheets!" as proof of how useless he is,' says Alice. 'And every time I'm ironing them or putting them away, it's like a little refrain running through my head: "He's so useless, he'd be completely lost without me."'

When we're invested in not solving a problem, that problem has what's known as 'secondary gains', says counselling psychologist Jacqui Marson, author of *The Curse Of Lovely* (Piatkus, £12.99). If you want to understand your motives, think about secondary gains – 'what am I getting out of this?' Are you maintaining the status quo to keep the peace, or because you do like things



PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES



done a certain way, or because, at some level, you think it says something about your competence as a woman? 'We have to separate the messages we've absorbed about housework,' Marson says. 'The original function of, say, having clean floors (to prevent disease) versus the psychological meaning (you're not a good woman if you're not a good housekeeper). If we don't address that, we can't have a choice in how we react.'

Making a change

The answer is both simple and complicated. Simple, in that it's about asking for what you want, and complicated in that it involves unpicking attitudes built up over a lifetime. But, there are solutions. If you find it impossible to broach this without getting angry, try the BEAR technique (right) – a strategy Marson developed for working with couples. Setting boundaries can help, experts agree, so each of you has

responsibility for specific tasks, and stick to those. For example: you do the dishes, he cleans floors. The key is not to break your agreed rule. 'When I had the chat with my husband, we decided he'd be in charge of cooking,' Marson says. 'Which meant that for a couple of years, I had to eat a lot of steaks and burgers – things I wouldn't have chosen – but I was determined to stick to our

agreement.' When I heard that story, my first thought was 'ergh, horrendous, I'd have to cook on some nights,' and suddenly, my secondary gains were pretty obvious. I might complain about being the one who always cooks, or shops for food, but I get to eat what I want.

There's an element of learning to let go, of pushing your boundaries a little. If you feel anxious about changing your habits (or have a partner who might take a bit of persuading), Marson is an advocate of the One Per Cent rule – 'ask yourself, what behaviours could I change slightly – what could I do one per cent differently? Then if that goes OK, you could try doing things five per cent differently, or 20 per cent.' Perhaps you start by making a pact with yourself not to clean up after anyone else at the weekend, and see how you feel (or if anyone else does the cleaning).

I'm trying my own five per cent experiment at the moment – I'm not vacuuming. As we have a scruffy dog and dark wood floors, this may be more like a 20 per cent experiment. A small rug of dog hairs is forming, I swear, before my very eyes. But I remember Marson's words – who is going to die if I don't vacuum? Answer: no-one. Why does it matter to me? Answer: quite long and complicated, but basically, it comes down to my expectations of being shamed by a particular 'friend'. What have I got to lose? Answer: so far, absolutely nothing.

HOW TO TALK HOUSE

If you want to have a meaningful discussion about changing the balance of power, then recognise it's a difficult subject that may bring up tricky emotions for both of you. Jacqui Marson created the BEAR acronym as a useful technique to start with:

B BREATHE FIRST. If you're tense when you launch into your conversation, the other person will pick up on it and get defensive.

E EULOGISE. Give the other person a genuine piece of praise before laying out what you're not happy about.

A ACCEPT that you won't always be in the right. Take on board what the other person says.

R RESPECT EACH OTHER. Use 'I' not 'you' statements and avoid blaming the other person.

Naomi Klein

[**SHARED VALUES**] Author and social activist Naomi Klein made her name with *No Logo*, a critique of big brand globalisation. Her latest book, *This Changes Everything*, tackles climate change

INTERVIEW **ELIZABETH HEATHCOTE**

One of my core values is consistency, in the sense of being the same person in public and private. That's something I've strived for, and it's one of the things that disappoints me most in other people – when you see a huge inconsistency between their public and private persona.

Related to that is gratitude as a way of interacting with the world, striving to acknowledge our interdependence on other people and natural systems.

From my family, I got some strong role models about the importance of standing up for your beliefs, and also an understanding that there are consequences for taking a position that is not in line with the dominant values of the culture. I live in Canada, but my extended family lives in America. I was told this was because my father did not want to go to Vietnam when he was drafted, so he had to either go to jail or leave his country. It wasn't interpreted as courage; it was interpreted as what you had to do.

I think it takes a huge amount of emotional energy to hold back our fears associated with the fact that, on some level, we all know that our shared home is in peril – that we're being made unsafe at a core level. I think it's like any form of denial – there is relief in letting go of it.

I was personally only able to go down that road once I saw that by addressing climate change, it could be more than just preventing bad things happening – it could actively build a better society than we have now. It could be an inspiring, transformational project and something we'd want to do with or without climate change on lots of levels.

I struggle with words like optimism, as I feel it implies I'm sure everything is going to be OK and I'm not. I see a possible positive outlook, and I invest my energy in trying to increase the chances of that outcome being the one that we choose. Because I by no means feel it's inevitable we'll

make the right choice – in fact, I know it is unlikely. But the alternate route is so terrifying to me that I see no ethical alternative than to do everything I can to try to help us veer.

I stay hopeful by making sure I don't lose sight of the fact that this is not an individual project. What gives me most hope is being in movements with other people. It was a huge gift to me that my book launched the same week that the largest climate march in history in New York took place, and that I got to attend it and carry that feeling of being with 400,000 people from so many different backgrounds in this incredibly energetic, creative demonstration.

I know what overwhelms me and it's isolation... People ask me, what can I do? And the answer is, you can't [solve it on your own]. The idea that you, as an individual, can stop climate change, is a product of our age of hyper-individualism. That's a crazy question. Of course we have to do this together; we have to do this in community and in movements.

We have to change our economic system. We have a system that's built on pursuing short-term profit and growth. We need to seriously contract parts of our economy that are high carbon. We can expand parts of it that are low carbon, like the care-giving professions, teaching and the arts, so it isn't just about degrowth or contraction – it's about deciding what kind of a society we want.

What makes me hopeful is that the very narrow market fundamentalist view of the world is failing people on many other levels – and people know it. You look at what's happening all over Europe in the huge uprisings against austerity, and the incredible toll that putting profit above all else is taking on human health, happiness and security already. If all I cared about was carbon, I'd feel hopeless. In a paradoxical way, by making this bigger, it becomes more possible to imagine a solution.

'This Changes Everything' by Naomi Klein (Penguin, £8.99) is out now

PHOTOGRAPH: ANYA CHIBULIS/THE GUARDIAN



Who do you think you are?

[SPIRITUALITY] When Jane Alexander, a renowned wellbeing author and writer, found herself questioning her beliefs and faith, she went on a Zen Buddhist retreat in search of answers

Spirituality is a part of me; I've spent my entire adult life believing in a meaningful universe, in connection and purpose. I'm the type who trusts the messages on my morning teabag; who can find synchronicity in music playing at the gym. I'm a stargazer, a fire-watcher, a dream-catcher.

I grew up in a house where people debated past lives over breakfast. If you had a headache, you were given a homeopathic pill; if you felt grumpy, you were wound into a yoga pose. Small wonder I've ended up spending the last 25 years reporting on therapies, treatments and retreats for magazines and newspapers. I've written over 20 books on natural health, wellbeing and assorted esoterica, the latest being *Wellbeing & Mindfulness* (Carlton Books, £18.99). How many retreats have I been on? I've lost count, but last year alone I tallied 12 – or was it 13?

However, over the last year or so, the magic drained away to leave a bleak and barren world. It wasn't depression – I've been there and have the black dog's collar to prove it – it

was a deeply unpleasant nihilism. Was it a midlife existential crisis? It seemed so clichéd, I tried to dismiss it as a hormonal hiccup at the onset of menopause. Or perhaps I had simply

“Sure, why not? I thought. I simply couldn't be bothered to say no. After all, what did I have to lose?”

become *too* introspective, spending too many nights staring at stars, lost and dizzy in the vastness of the universe. Whatever it was, I felt so bleak I stopped doing yoga, stopped meditating and stopped looking for signs; I just slumped in front of the TV watching back-to-back repeats of *Grey's Anatomy*, which convinced me even more that we're just bags of bones and flesh fired by neural impulses.

Then my friend Kim challenged me to go on a Zen Intensive retreat run by

Daizan Julian Skinner of Zenways. 'It's hardcore,' she said. 'You'll love it and you'll hate it.' She explained that, while most meditation retreats rely on staying in silence with yourself, the Zenways approach is far more active, involving intense self-questioning. It goes far further than the standard relaxing and stress-busting mindfulness that most retreats offer. The weekend aims to 'awaken' you – to help you achieve enlightenment. Yes, as in the Buddha thing. It's a big claim, but Kim said up to half the participants typically 'get it' over the course of the retreat. Was I game, she asked? 'Sure, why not?' I've tried pretty much every kind of meditation and mindfulness going, as well as most types of yoga, therapy and bodywork, but I simply couldn't be bothered to say no. And after all, what did I have to lose? Anything was preferable to *Fifty Shades of meh*.

My room was the first sign that this was about as far from a pampering retreat as it's possible to get. The retreat was being held at a (Christian) monastery and my bedroom was a monk's cell with a narrow bed, desk, >>>



>>> chair and sink – that was it. The retreats are strictly distraction-free: no phone, laptop, books, writing, no sex even (whether with a partner or yourself!), so I switched off my phone and joined the group of 18, an equal mix of men and women, with ages ranging from 20 to 80.

Zen is from a school of Buddhism that developed initially in China before spreading into Japan, Vietnam and Korea. It's considered enigmatic and is well-known for its *koans*, paradoxical questions like 'What is the sound of one hand clapping?' designed to jolt you into fresh ways of seeing yourself and the world. Daizan, a quietly spoken middle-aged man who exuded calm and warmth, said while Zen wants to shake you out of a rut, 'it's not about becoming a monk, or meditating for 12 hours a day. Zen is simply designed to help you see the world with new eyes; to make you happy.'

He explained that we come up with all sorts of strategies to manage conflict and loneliness; that we distract ourselves, not just with TV, the online world or too many glasses of wine; but also with work, families and friends. 'Often, despite having great careers or relationships, we still feel a sense of being alone; of being alienated from the world,' he said. That struck a chord.

Sounds simple but...

We spent the majority of the day in 'Group Sanzen'. It was hard work – we started at 6.30am and finished at 11pm and, even when we weren't sitting in formal practice, Daizan said we should keep focused on the work. The work? Just one simple-sounding question: 'Who am I?' 'It's the most important question a human can ask,' said Daizan. 'It opens up the universe.'

We worked in pairs for 13 sessions a day, sitting opposite one another and taking it in turns to say quietly: 'Tell me who you are.' If you were the one questioning, your job was simply to sit

ASK YOURSELF, 'WHO AM I?'

- Try to practise meditation every day – aim for 25 minutes. In addition, keep the question in mind during your day and come back to it as often as possible.
- Sit in a comfortable position, either on the floor or on a firm chair.
- As you breathe out, ask yourself silently, 'Who am I?'
- As you breathe in, just allow whatever arises – thoughts, memories, perceptions, sensations, theories. Don't censor yourself; just observe each thought, then let it go. Keep returning to the question, 'Who am I?'
- Bear in mind that there is more to you than any theory, any past, any emotion. Who are you really? Keep asking yourself the question. Keep investigating.
- As you come to the end of the session, gently sway your body from side to side. Stretch a little and come to standing.

in silence, in complete acceptance and non-judgment, as a witness. If you were responding, you had to look within and express honestly whatever came up. It felt like therapy but, rather than dwelling on the past or trying to analyse responses, we were encouraged just to observe what emerged, then let it go.

I've always loved silent meditation, but I balked at this. I didn't want to talk about myself. I was bored of me. I was already sure that 'I' wasn't anything other than a mental process. I was convinced that 'god', 'spirit', whatever you call it, was a survival mechanism; that spiritual highs were purely neurochemicals patting us on the mind. But I went along with it for the sake of politeness and all kinds of random memories started popping up; then, bizarrely, physical symptoms. Old aches and pains ambushed me; ancient heartaches, long-forgotten injuries. At one point, I felt a sick crunch and my wrist went weak, as my body

remembered falling off a pony, aged 10. My belly even ballooned and twisted as it revisited my difficult pregnancy. The listening was more illuminating still. In everyday life we bat words around; we barely hear the other person, so busy are we formulating a response. How seldom do we ever feel and *ponder* before we talk? I became entranced by these people – watching their faces and listening to their stories I saw the beauty and magic in each and every one of them as if in super HD, in the closest and clearest focus. It was the most extraordinary blissful and humbling experience.

Did I achieve enlightenment? No. But a fair number of people there did and their faces shone with a truly transcendent joy. Part of me felt happy for them but, I'll be honest, the larger part was seriously hacked off. Some of these people had never even meditated before the weekend, while I've been on this spiritual quest for almost my entire life. How come I didn't get to be enlightened? So I asked myself, 'Who am I?' yet once more and laughed – at my overeager ego, at my competitive striving self and its scrabbling for achievement, for the prize.

The aftermath was interesting. I usually come home from a retreat feeling wildly positive, full of good intentions, fired with resolutions. But this time, I sank into a further slump. Yet, the question remained and I found myself asking it, over and over – and still do, three months later. Sometimes I wake in the night and lie there, quietly breathing, repeating softly, 'Who am I?' Or it will catch me at odd moments during the day. 'Who am I?' I still haven't 'got it' and I certainly haven't become enlightened but, gradually, I've become remarkably calm and peaceful... almost, you might say, Zen.

Zenways runs workshops and intensive retreats and can also put you in touch with a teacher for study and meditation. Tuition on the intensive retreats is by donation and accommodation is low-cost. For details, see zenways.org

GOOD THOUGHTS



“When you possess light within, you see it externally”

ANÁIS NIN



Start living in the moment

[**HAPPINESS**] Join our tribe of readers who are spreading joy by creating Happiness Clubs around the UK, with the help of *Psychologies* and Action for Happiness. This month, the focus is on noticing the world around you

Last month in our Happiness Club, we walked over 500 miles between us. Our focus for the month was exercising and we each committed to walking our 10,000 steps a day to improve our mood. The added pay-off is that this month, we're also feeling leaner and fitter, as well as cheerier. We even met for a 'happiness walk' mid-month on the South Downs – and managed to laugh throughout despite it being the most miserable rainy day ever. (Although a stop at the pub definitely helped!)

Four months since the founding of our Happiness Club and we're sharing more about what makes us tick, what's working and what's not. It's amazing how sharing how you feel – and realising you're not alone – has the ability to make you feel more supported, and yes, happier.

The miracle of mindfulness

This month, we are focusing on the 'fourth key to happiness' from Action for Happiness: noticing the world around you. The experts call this 'mindfulness', which means having as full as possible awareness of what is around us – what we can

see, hear, touch and taste. Plus, noticing and observing our thoughts and feelings.

Mindfulness is paying attention – with intention, because if we're not careful, we can find ourselves dwelling on our worries. The brain is a wonderful organ, but it has a bias towards negativity. Yes, useful to ensure our survival and safety, but not great if you actively seek and focus on perceived threats. Mindfulness is like being aware of the many TV channels you can choose to watch and opting to pay attention to the ones that make you feel good, educate you and/or make you laugh, versus mindless channel-surfing of those that makes you feel flat, tired and fearful.

'By weaving mindfulness into your day – to be present in the moment rather than worrying about what you've just done or planning what you've got to do next – creates a sense of space and helps us feel a bit more in control,' says Vanessa King, positive psychology expert at Action for Happiness.

The science bit

Also, a growing number of scientific studies are showing the benefits of mindfulness can improve many aspects of our



lives – everything from our physical and mental wellbeing and our relationships, to our performance at school and work. And it appears to have positive effects for everyone, from children to the elderly*. One researcher even suggests that once you have learned the technique, mindfulness has a ‘transmitting quality’. Its benefits increase over time and, with practice, can spread to many areas of our daily lives.

This all sounds great, but mindfulness is something that few of us do naturally in today’s busy, multi-tasking world. However, it is something we can train ourselves to do. It’s simple, yet can feel hard until you learn how.

King suggests that we start by thinking small. ‘Even just a few seconds can make a difference to how we feel. Stop for just one minute and breathe. Just focus on your breath going in and out. You may find it helpful to count one as you breathe in, and two as you breathe out,’ she says. Here are some of her other suggestions:

- Stop and notice what’s around you. If you’re outside, focus on the colour of the leaves, the sky (or walls, ceilings and floors if you are indoors). What can you hear? What’s the furthest sound you can hear? What can you smell? Notice your feet on the ground or seat on the chair. Which bits are in contact and which not? What’s going on in your body? Which areas are cold or warm, which are tense or relaxed?
- Try mindful eating. How many of us eat on the run or while we are doing something else? Why not sit down to eat? Notice what you are eating – the texture, colour and smell. Take a small mouthful and chew slowly – what is the texture in your mouth and on your tongue? What can you taste first and next? Make the mouthful last as long as you can.
- Download a free video or podcast of one, three, or 10-minute mindfulness exercises. Set your alarm or schedule a reminder to do it regularly, perhaps every other day. Do it when you can take a few minutes out.

WHAT IS A HAPPINESS CLUB?

A book club-style gathering in your own home where you invite friends along to discuss how you can put happiness – your own and other people’s – at the heart of your life philosophy. With our Happiness Clubs, *Psychologies* and charity Action for Happiness are working together on a shared vision to create a happier and less self-centred world, with far fewer people suffering from mental health problems and far more people feeling good, functioning well and helping others.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS AT YOUR HAPPINESS CLUB

1 When was the last time you found yourself doing something mindlessly? For example, driving and not noticing the journey.

discuss what you noticed about your thoughts. Were they negative or positive?

2 Describe the last time you felt fully focused in the present and fully enjoyed doing something.

4 What thoughts do you regularly find yourself dwelling on and how do they make you feel?

3 Set a timer and ask your group to close their eyes and be quiet for two minutes. Once the time is up,

5 What is the one mindfulness habit you can create starting this month? For example, noticing your thoughts while you’re brushing your teeth.

HOW TO SET UP YOUR HAPPINESS CLUB

Join us in our year-long happiness experiment!

All the materials you need to register and start your own Happiness Club can be found on:

lifelabs.psychologies.co.uk/channels/154-the-happiness-club. Be inspired by video interviews with Mark Williamson, director of Action for Happiness, and positive psychologist Vanessa King offering tips and cutting-edge research about happiness. Plus, there’s inspiration from our Happiness Clubbers.

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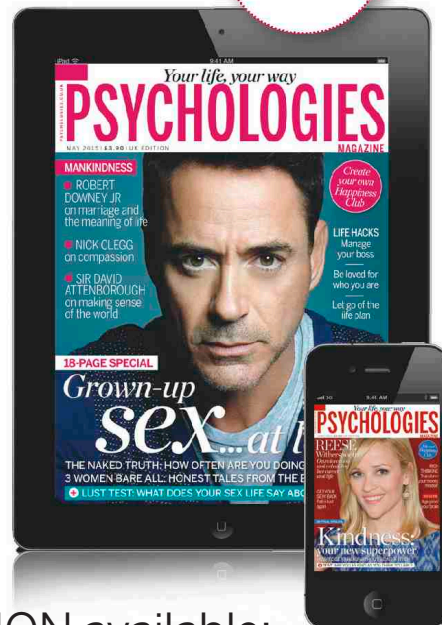
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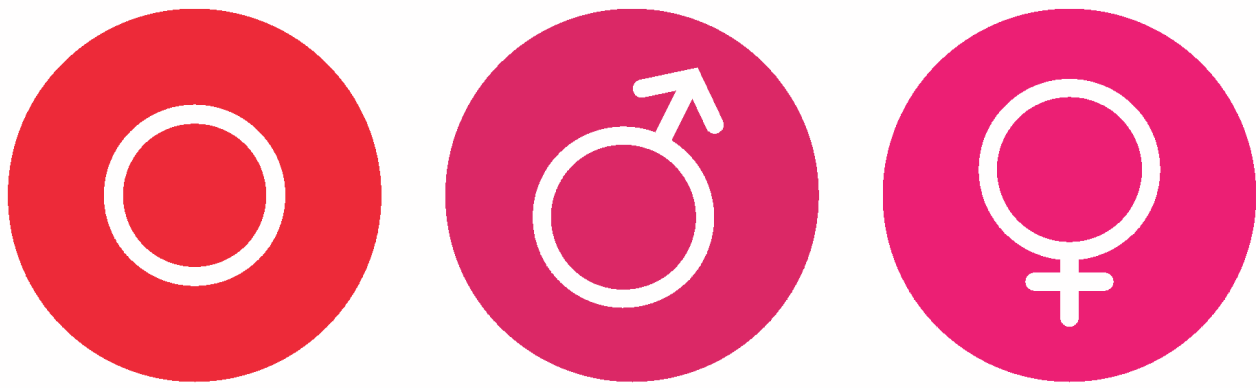
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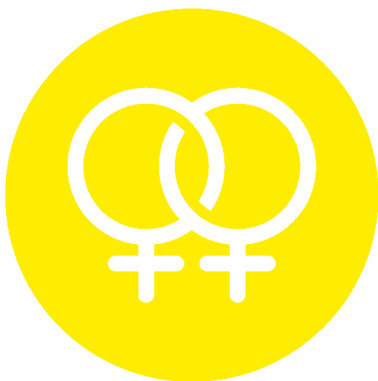
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Can we drop the labels?

[**SEXUALITY**] There are many possibilities available when it comes to describing our sexual identity, says **Temma Ehrenfeld** – it's not all just 'straight', 'gay' or 'bi'. Officially identifying as bisexual, she argues things may be even more nuanced than the terms we use allow for





They are called 'girl-crushes'. Every so often, you find a new female friend and within weeks, she's the centre of your emotional world. You text like teenagers, giggle and dress up for your dinners together. One night, she wears a cleavage-revealing red shirt. You begin to focus on her collarbone, she catches you and you look up and mumble, 'I've got a necklace that would look great on you. I never wear it.' You resist looking down. Would you sleep with her?

I might. Women can be astonishing lovers, though my serious relationships have all been with men. My online dating profile officially identifies me as 'bi' and I've gone on dates with gay women. My personal experience is that women, in general, are picky and lesbians are afraid of bisexuals. It's easier, at least for me, to find a man. When I meet a new (straight) friend, I give her the news pretty

quickly. Should she begin fiercely flirting, I let her decide how far it goes.

It doesn't surprise me a bit that straight women might lust for me. According to the Office for National Statistics, only 0.8 per cent of UK women say they are lesbians or bisexual – half the figure for men identifying as gay or bisexual. Yet when Katy Perry sang 'I kissed a girl,' stealing her title from a 1995 indie hit by Jill Sobule, lots of girls sang along. Granted, people aren't necessarily telling the truth to a census taker. *The Guardian* reported that the Treasury, when analysing the financial implications of the Civil Partnership Act, estimated that 6 per cent of the adult population was gay, lesbian or bi – Ben Summerskill, chief executive of the gay rights organisation Stonewall, told the paper he thought that bigger number was 'sensible'.

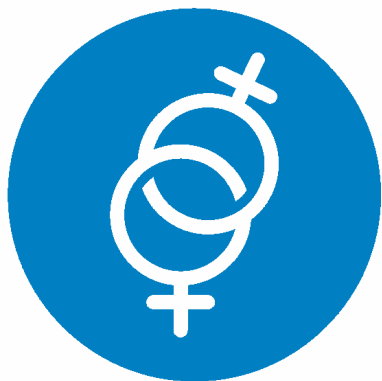
It's also not unreasonable to kiss a girl – or two or three – and decline to

embrace the term 'bisexual'. Based on interviews in the 1940s, the famous US sex researcher Alfred Kinsey came up with a scale that attempted to measure where people stood on a continuum from gay to straight. And yet all these years later, we're still not currently able to say: 'I'm 6.5 hetero'.

Everything changes

Even if we did spout a number, it might not stay true for long. Kinsey developed the continuum concept to explain inconsistency. He and his team had found that 'sexual behaviour, thoughts and feelings toward the same or opposite sex was not always consistent across time,' to quote the website of the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University.

Then the gay civil rights movement arrived, and politics – even rainbow politics – works better in black and white. In the early days, the movement took the position that people fit >>>



into one of three groups – gay, straight or bi – and dismissed any shades of grey. To keep things simple, another popular idea dismissed bisexuality, decreeing that anyone who identified as bi was really gay or straight.

Over in the scientific camp, the evidence Kinsey had tried to address with his scale wasn't studied for decades. But recently, the psychologist Robert Epstein, a former editor of *Psychology Today*, has argued that Kinsey was right. Sexual orientation, he says, is a continuum and most people fall somewhere in the middle, which means they 'experience some degree of same-sex attraction at some point in their lives.' Epstein, who has collected online survey responses from more than 17,000 respondents around the world, says that their answers match the Katy Perry phenomenon: women report more same-sex attraction than men do, and more flexibility in expressing their desires.

Psychologist Richard Lippa of California State University didn't just ask survey questions; he had men and women who consider themselves heterosexual rate their attraction to pictures of models in swimsuits. He also unobtrusively tracked the time they spent looking at the photos. Separately, he asked other participants to rank the models according to how attractive they were by societal standards. As predicted, the men were keener on the female models and spent more time looking at those photos. The women, on the other hand, said they were attracted to both male and female models, and they spent more time looking at the photos of the most attractive models, whether they were male or female.

In another study, Lippa looked at how libido matched up with bisexual activity when he analysed results from online surveys created by a team of psychologists for the BBC TV series,

Secrets Of The Sexes. The results seemed to show that lustier women are more bisexual. 'There may be some degree of latent same-sex attraction in most women,' Lippa says. 'With women who have high sex drives, this latent attraction can be energised.'

After all, the Kinsey interviews found changes in sexual desires over time – but Kinsey didn't find many people who were conscious of a continuous attraction to both genders. It's possible that just as people's libidos can change, so can the object of their desires. A woman may be attracted to

the two-thirds she reported when she published her book *Sexual Fluidity: Understanding Women's Love And Desire* (Harvard University Press, £15.95). 'Six years after the book, the data holds up,' she told me.

Body talk

Things get even more complex when scientists look at the female physiological response. Studies that try to measure response independent of awareness – through eye-tracking, brain scans and genital arousal – find that the female 'sexual response is

0.8%
of UK women
say they are
lesbians or
bisexual*

"We don't
know the links
between desire and
behaviour – there
are lots of leaps
in between"

women when she's feeling especially hot (or not). University of Utah psychologist Lisa Diamond reports that women may feel drawn to women for years, then switch to men – or vice versa. She has been following 100 women who described themselves as lesbian, bisexual, or 'unlabelled' since 1995, when they were in their twenties, interviewing them every two or three years. At each point, she says, 25 to 32 per cent of the group changed their sexual identity, and the switchers were not the same people. The most popular change was to 'unlabelled,' which Diamond says supports her fluidity thesis. Nearly 80 per cent of the group had changed their sexual identity at least once by 2009, up from

nonspecific,' psychologist Meredith Chivers reported in her 2010 review of the 2005 research. Straight women, for example, will respond as much to a picture of a woman masturbating as to a picture of a man, whereas heterosexual men (and lesbians) prefer photos of women. In Chivers' own research, from the University of Toronto, she and her colleagues found that women of all sexual orientations could be aroused by a range of images, including male-male, male-female, and female-female pornography. They were even turned on by the sight of monkeys mating – although they wouldn't admit it.

Of course, this doesn't mean that women are actually interested in sex

with monkeys, and it doesn't mean that they'll sleep with other women. 'We don't know the links between desire and behaviour,' she told me. 'There are a lot of leaps in between.' Interestingly, women's statements about their sexual arousal and their measured physiological responses match up less neatly than men's, and some research suggests a link from the mismatch to sexual dysfunction. To boil that down, women's sexual responses are complex, and they themselves don't always know what they like. In *What Do Women Want?*:



Adventures In The Science Of Female Desire, journalist Daniel Bergner, drawing in part on Chivers' research, ultimately concludes that female desire is an 'underestimated and constrained force, even in our times'.

Unleash that force and you have more choices, but you may still want to choose monogamy and a particular identity. A friend I've known since our teens, Jessica, had only heterosexual relationships before she decided in her mid-twenties to 'do the lesbian thing,' as she called it. When she met a lesbian who was visiting the area where she lived for a weekend conference, they decided on the spot to live together. She bought a house, her new lover moved in and they built a tight-knit lesbian circle around a weekly

spiritual group. A couple of times I dared to argue, 'Why call yourself lesbian? You're bi.' She said, 'I'm lesbian because I say I am.' To me, that was just illogical and inaccurate.

Fluid identities

When her relationship went awry, she then sought out sexual affairs with men. In her thirties, she fell for a man who was great in bed. Yet Jessica *still* said she was a lesbian – she was ready to leave her live-in female partner, but she didn't want to lose her beloved community. Jessica went on to meet another lesbian and, after a decade together, last year, they legally married. She pushes aside the occasional fantasy about men.

Jessica has chosen a lesbian identity and it would be unenlightened to consider her 'confused'. I dropped out of a postgraduate course to write fiction. I'm also a good dancer. When I meet people at parties, I call myself a 'writer,' not 'bi-talented'.

As poets have always known, love confuses us and love changes. Dr Lisa Diamond has a fascinating theory to explain people who switch identities. Attraction, romance, and identity may be separate psychological functions, she says. The complexity of the emerging biochemical understanding of love and desire supports her case. Romance – the butterflies, obsession and euphoria – is linked to the neurotransmitter dopamine. Lust is associated with testosterone, and then there's oxytocin, which makes us bond and feel like family. All three neurotransmitters can come and go; they can co-operate or fight. We are the ones who decide what we'll do with them.

If you're a die-hard romantic, like one woman Diamond studied, you may believe in love more than gender-picking. 'Deep down, it's just a matter of who I meet – and fall in love with,' she said.

LEARNING ABOUT LABELS: TEENAGERS

Clinical psychologist and young adult author Becky Albertalli talks about labelling teenage sexuality:

There's something tricky about labels. They're simultaneously useful and inadequate, necessary and problematic. As a clinical psychologist with a special interest in working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex and asexual teens [LGBTQIA+], I use labels regularly. They are inescapable.

For some people, the rush to label and categorise is stressful and confusing. We're often uncomfortable with ambiguity and we place a lot of pressures on teens to declare themselves, sometimes before they're ready. Even before they come out, LGBTQIA+ teens are primed to place themselves in particular categories. We leave little space for fluidity – even though this fluidity can be a huge part of a teen's experience. Even more importantly, sometimes fluidity of gender and sexual orientation can be a core aspect of a person's identity.

Yet, labels can be lifesaving; they can help us integrate complicated aspects of our identities. For some, labels can be a point of access into the LGBTQIA+ community. They can be critical in helping these teens find and connect with each other.

There are no universal answers, which means it's important to empower teens to embrace or reject labels on a person-by-person basis. It's OK to find comfort in them. It's OK to find more comfort in fluidity. It's OK to change your mind, and it's OK not to know. I believe labels should be used if (and only if) they are useful for you.

Becky Albertalli's novel *'Simon Vs The Homo Sapiens Agenda'* (Penguin, £7.99), is out now

Next month in **PSYCHOLOGIES**



18-PAGE SECTION

Face-to-face friends

Improve your friendships by getting real

Stuck on you

What it means when you're committed – but you've got a crush

Father figure

'I changed one thing to improve my relationship with my dad'

Great expectations

What makes us expect certain standards from other people?

Mind how you go

Our pick of the best routes to mindfulness

Your life, your way

DON'T MISS the July issue – on sale 29 May

There are three steps to encouraging your child – competence, connection and choice, says Ilona Boniwell

“How to motivate your child”



DR ILONA BONIWELL is course leader for the new *International MSc in Applied Positive Psychology* at Anglia Ruskin University. She lives with her husband, their toddler and four teenagers from previous marriages

Got a **QUESTION** for Ilona? Email ilona@psychologies.co.uk, with 'ILONA' in the subject line

Whenver I talk to a parent, the same theme emerges again and again: 'My son/daughter is just not motivated to study/work/do anything. What can I possibly do?'

Motivation is a peculiar little animal of the human psyche. The more you force it to come out of its hiding hole, the further it retreats. And sometimes, when you try to get things under control, it disappears altogether.

Although motivation can't be forced, there are factors that can improve the rate of its occurrence, which can make children progress from a state of amotivation (when they don't want and don't do) to extrinsic motivation (when they do something because they're forced to), to introjected motivation (doing something out of feeling guilty), through to integrated motivation (I understand why I am doing this) and finally, to the intrinsic (I like it) one. Think of the factors underlying motivation in terms of the triple 'C' – competence, connection and choice.

● **Competence** is a tendency to be interested and open and seek learning opportunities, to acquire new skills. Start by observing your child – where does her competence express itself? How can you build on this and also break down gaining competence into

do-able chunks? We can appreciate that reading an entire chapter in a textbook can be daunting for a typical 12-year-old. Separate it into sections, creating smaller sub-goals. Each time they finish one, and achieve their sub-goal, their competence is building up.

● **Connection** is a need to relate. It involves building strong relationships with others and feeling that you belong. While younger children are more prone to establishing relationships with family members, adolescents are far more likely to give priority to others their own age. This is why some of the easiest ways to build their motivation is by bringing a friend along for an outing, encouraging two or three pals to work on a project together, or signing up your son or daughter for a class in which their new peers are likely to 'approve' certain activities outside of their usual scope of interest.

Andrew, my 16-year-old, had not found museums to be 'cool' for the last three years or so, but he recently started to catch up on his cultural awareness, simply because a girl he fancies is interested in art!

● **Choice** means doing something in accordance with one's personal volition (rather than external control), aligning our actions with something we value. If we are relatively free to choose our

actions, then it's easier for us to appreciate the reasons for performing them. However, if we feel forced to do something, it's more difficult for us to internalise the motivation. That's why offering rewards for activities that should be internally motivating actually serves to undermine performance and achievement. So forget about bribery for exam results, and try to put your teen into a position of responsibility instead. Once they feel that the responsibility is real ('It is you who is choosing your college, not me'), they are very likely to rise to the occasion.

MORE INSPIRATION

Read: *Positive Psychology In A Nutshell* by Ilona Boniwell (Open University Press, £12.99)

Find: some original and interesting research on motivation at selfdeterminationtheory.org

Learn: more about motivation by taking an MSc in Applied Positive Psychology at Anglia Ruskin University, anglia.ac.uk/imapp

What's the most important thing in your life right now?



Is it being happy or achieving something you care passionately about?

Is it a personal relationship with a partner, friend or even a potential partner?

Is it work related involving your boss, colleagues, team mates or customers?

Is it family related with children, siblings or parents?

Or is it probably the most important thing of all; the way you view yourself?

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LOVE

How to find love online

Every month, **Sarah Abell** invites you to try a 30-day experiment to improve your love life

1 THE PROJECT

Ever spent hours creating the perfect online dating profile? Did you airbrush your best photo and carefully craft an amazing description? You might have been wasting your time. According to research, most people are looking for the perfect match – but not a perfect person. Successful, humble and real scores better.

2 THE AIM

To attract a potential mate online, the best thing you can do is be yourself and have a realistic, balanced profile.

3 THE THEORY

Researchers at the University of Iowa set out to discover how people who use dating sites respond to different ways people present themselves online. They created eight online profiles of various combinations – four men, four women – and listed them on OKCupid – a free, online site. Participants were asked to decide which profiles they would want to contact. Researchers thought profiles with a mix of high selective self-presentation (those who sounded perfect) and high warranty (those who could be traced to a real person), would be the most popular.

But people were turned off by profiles that sounded too good to be true – it was actually those with a low self-presentation and a high warranty that received most interest. One of the study authors, Andy High, says: 'You want to balance all that's wonderful about yourself with some things that aren't negative, but more humble or realistic.'



NOW TRY IT OUT

- **Reflect the real you.** When creating a dating profile, use photos that actually look like you and are up-to-date.
- **Seek a second opinion.** Get a trusted friend to make sure that your profile truly sums you up and that your photo is a good representation of you.
- **Link to you in the real world.** People tend to trust people who actually exist in the real world so, if you can link to a blog or an online presence, or if you mention your job – that can help.
- **Be yourself.** What are the things that make you *you*? Mention something that is unique about you and don't be afraid to throw in a few quirky or fun bits of information or stories about yourself. Aim to be authentic and you never know what might happen!

SARAH ABELL is an author, speaker and relationships coach. Find out how authentic you are with her free test at nakedhedgehogs.com

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The painting in the living room is by Louisa's mum, artist Cherrill Parris-Fox, inspired by one of Louisa's scarf designs

'My mother used to read these Just William books to me and I want to do the same for Art'



The chair was from a sidewalk sale in San Francisco and Louisa had it reupholstered. The goose lamp used to belong to Louisa and her sister and now lights up the hall at night



'Our friend Mark Giglio handcrafted the Kokeshi figures'

“Everything is the same, yet it’s different”

Fashion designer Louisa Parris’ London flat is her family home in more ways than one... it was where her parents lived for 25 years

WORDS **ANDRÉA CHILDS** PHOTOGRAPHS **EMMA LEWIS**

YOU KNOW THAT sense of déjà vu when you walk into the home you grew up in? The familiar view from the kitchen window; the trace of a scent from an opened drawer... ‘Oh gosh, I get flashbacks all the time – especially in my old bedroom,’ laughs scarf and womenswear designer Louisa Parris, 36. ‘I remember being lectured by my mum and dad about staying safe on a girls’ holiday to Ibiza when I was 17.’

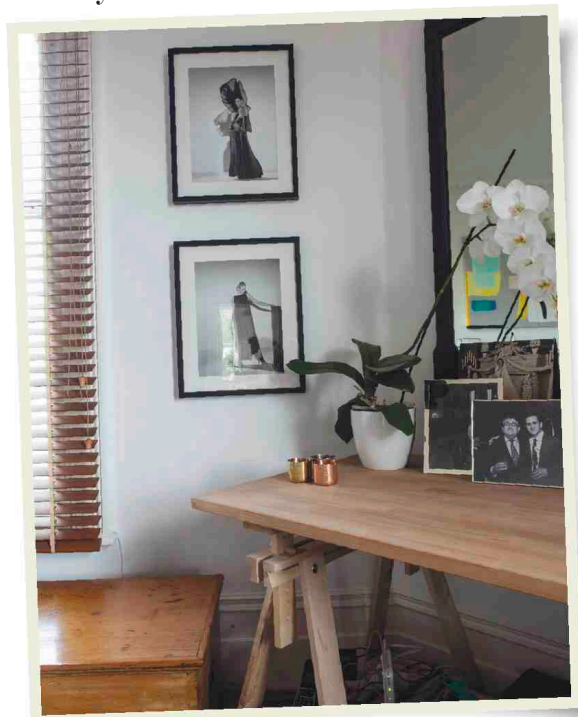
There’s a reason why Louisa’s memories are particularly resonant. The London flat she grew up in is now

the home she shares with her graphic designer husband, Chris Duggan, and their son Art, who is two. ‘It’s funny. My parents would never have papered the bathroom in the palm print I’ve used, but the blinds are the same ones they chose. I can still see the watermarks I made when I used to splash in the bath. Everything is the same, yet it’s different, because it’s my home now.’

This return to the nest wasn’t predicted. Louisa’s parents had been living in the flat when they made the decision to separate, emptying it of the

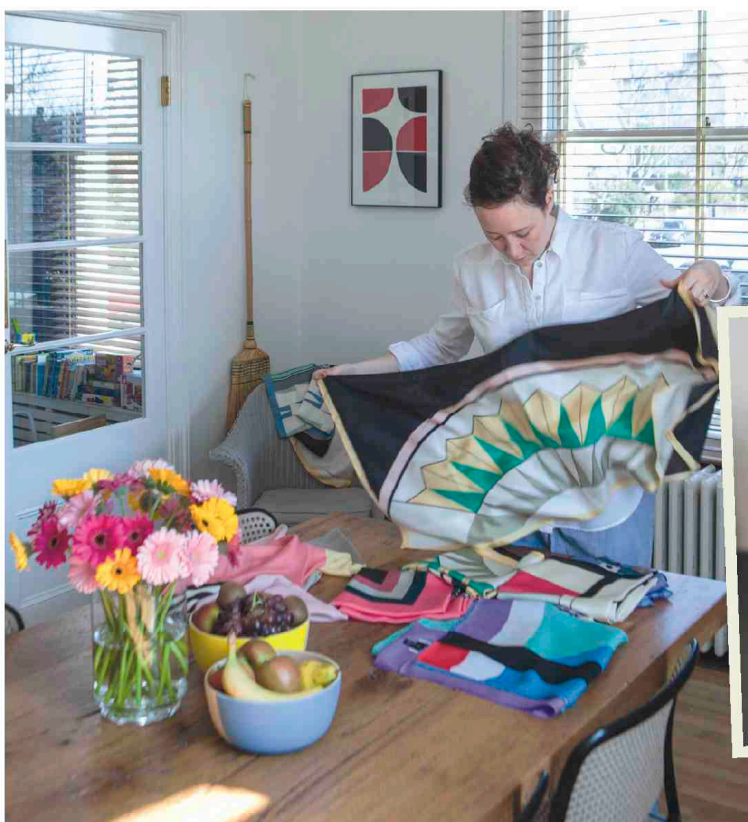
home comforts accumulated over 25 years of marriage. At the time, Louisa and Chris were living in San Francisco. ‘Chris and I met at college, then reconnected in 2004,’ she remembers. ‘I’d won the Womenswear Collection Award, and then had great work experience with Donna Karan, Mulberry and Ghost. But I couldn’t get a job and was feeling lost. In 2005, when Chris was offered a job in California, we took the leap. We’d only been together six months, but we were comfortable with each other. Then, on >>>

my home



ABOVE: Photos from Louisa's graduate fashion collection hang on the wall. RIGHT and BELOW: Louisa with some of her designs at the large dining table

that is the heart of the home. 'We bought it when we finished doing up the flat. Our vision was for a family table that will be here for a very long time'



'My five tea caddies. They drive my family mad as no-one understands my colour-coded system!'



'I had these two Tolix stools in my studio when we lived in San Francisco. They now make a perfect addition to the kitchen'

the day we flew to the US, I was offered a job here in the UK.'

The couple spent seven years in the US. 'It was really difficult for the first two years, because I was flying back to England every three weeks to work. Chris and I were in our own little bubble, and home was the space that existed between just the two of us – it was intimate but a bit lonely,' admits Louisa. 'Life improved when we got married in 2006. We made good friends and talked about buying a house and settling in the US, but, after seven years, the pull to come home was too strong.'

In 2012, the couple moved back to London and to the flat Louisa's parents had vacated. 'It was weird. My sister was also living here, but the place was virtually empty and our furniture was on a container ship in the middle of the Pacific Ocean,' she says. It seemed they had space to consider their next step but, within three months, Louisa was pregnant with Art and they'd begun

a breathless search for a property to purchase. 'Then my dad said, "Why don't you buy the flat? We'll keep the estate agents out of it and do the deal in the pub." And that's what happened.'

It could have been awkward – for Chris, moving into what had been his wife's family home; for Louisa, establishing her own space without stepping on her and her family's memories. 'But it's been surprisingly OK!' laughs Louisa. 'It helped that the flat had already changed; it wasn't the same home my parents had shared. Chris just sees it as a new property to put our fingerprints on.' The couple began making their mark as soon as the deeds were signed – putting in a new bathroom and kitchen, laying a wooden floor, and painting the walls white. Rather than erasing the flat's history, the changes were actually informed by it. 'My parents have always renovated properties and I was influenced by their ideas,' says Louisa. 'The brickwork in

our kitchen was copied from a house they restored in Bath, and the parquet in the living room was inspired by reclaimed basketball boarding they put down in the kitchen.'

Moving into the flat and becoming parents has meant Louisa and Chris have swapped the intimacy of their San Francisco life for a central role in their extended families. 'It can be like Clapham Junction here,' admits Louisa. 'Chris' siblings live nearby and pop in, my mum has been staying for the past three weekends, and my dad is here tomorrow to look after Art. Sometimes we have to shut the door and reclaim our "bubble", but I love that this flat is a bolt-hole for everyone. The idea of a family home is rare now, but my dream is never to let this place go. I want to be able to pass it on to the next generation.'

Louisa's scarf and womenswear collection is available online at louisaparris.com



Make your BIG impression

[**WORK**] Whether you have an important job interview or just want to be noticed in your current role – how can you make sure you stand out for all the right reasons? **Suzy Greaves** finds out

When you walk through the door, how do you think you come across? The real truth, says Heidi Grant Halvorson, author of *No One Understands You And What To Do About It* (Harvard Business Review, £14.99), is that most of us don't come across the way we intend. 'We can't see ourselves objectively. Human beings have a tendency to distort other people's feedback to fit their own views – which can be a huge problem at work and in your personal life. People may not trust you, may not like you, or may not even notice you as a result of these errors in

perception,' she says. But also the way we come across is often in direct correlation to how we feel about ourselves. If you're feeling scared, don't panic. There are some proven and simple techniques that can help us get into a more empowered mode before we even enter the room – that will not only make us look more confident, but also make us feel more confident. Plus, there are some surprising counterintuitive secrets to making a powerful impression, by doing the opposite of what you think might impress.

Here, we look at the latest psychological research on how you can go about creating the right impression. >>>



1

First impressions do count

Psychologists have discovered that, due to a process known as the ‘cognitive miser effect’, humans tend to think only as much as they feel they need to, making quick-fire assumptions about situations and other people.

When other people look at you, they just see what they expect to see, says Halvorson. Great if people have reason to believe that you’re smart – all they will see is evidence of intelligence in your behaviour. Not so good, for example, if they see you as lazy. Studies show those first impressions of a person last. Psychologists refer to this as ‘primacy effect’ – the information we first get about something is most likely to be remembered. Worse still, it can take a lot to shift that view. It’s not just what you say, either. First impressions are greatly influenced by non-verbal cues. Studies have found that these have over four times the impact on a first impression than anything you actually say.

If you’re about to have a job interview, do your research on who is interviewing you if you can, says Halvorson. The more you can know in advance about your perceiver’s likes, dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, the better equipped you will be to anticipate what’s being projected onto you so you can combat it. Other tips? Research shows that a smile and widening the eyes gives you warmth. And raise your eyebrows. This is a universal gesture of recognition and acknowledgement and makes you seem approachable.

2

Don’t hunch over your smartphone before an important meeting

Hunching over your phone before a meeting or presentation may be self-defeating, because it forces the user into a low-power pose, according to a recent study led by Maarten Bos, then a post-doctoral research fellow at Harvard Business School. Participants were assigned to complete several tasks on one of four gadgets – a hand-held device, tablet, laptop or a desktop computer. Then, the researcher tested subjects’ willingness to interrupt another person – a power-related behaviour. He left each subject alone in the room, saying to come and get him if he didn’t return in five minutes. Subjects who worked on the hand-held device waited significantly longer before interrupting him, compared with those on desktops, and some didn’t come out at all, suggesting their low-power posture sparked feelings of powerlessness.

Before important meetings, leave your phone in your bag and channel Wonder Woman (see point 6).

“We may be worried about our own performance and anxieties, but the trick is to focus on what the other person wants. Your currency is how useful you can be”

3

Focus on their needs, not yours

When you’ve adjusted your body language, take the attention off yourself and switch it on to the other person, says psychologist Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, author of *Confidence: The Surprising Truth About How Much You Need And How To Get It* (Profile Books, £9.99). ‘We may be worried about our own performance and anxieties, but the trick is to focus on what the other person wants. Ask lots of questions to establish what you can do to help the person you seek to influence to reach their goals. Understand the desires and challenges of your boss and create solutions. Your currency is how useful you can be.’ Halvorson adds: ‘To really get the attention of the most powerful person in the room, you’ll need to let them know how you can help facilitate their continuing, increasing awesomeness.’

4

Be humble

When meeting someone new, the perceiver will be unconsciously comparing and also trying to establish if you pose a threat, says Halvorson – ‘Is it OK to let my guard down, or do I need to stay on the alert?’ Being humble helps to neutralise the threat of comparison. Chamorro-Premuzic argues that if you exhibit some modesty with respect to your skills and abilities, people will add, on average, 20 to 30 per cent to their estimate of your competence. Blow your own trumpet too much and they’ll subtract the same amount.

5

Let the other person speak first

A strong handshake and confident greeting may not be the best option after all. New research suggests people respond more positively to

someone who comes across as trustworthy. Social psychologist Amy Cuddy is studying how we evaluate people we meet and we are mostly evaluated on two metrics, she says: trustworthiness and confidence.

‘When we form a first impression of another person it’s not a single impression – we’re really forming two,’ she says. ‘We’re judging how warm and trustworthy the person is, and that’s by trying to answer the question, “What are this person’s intentions toward me?” And we’re also asking ourselves, “How strong and competent is this person?” That’s really about whether or not they’re capable of enacting their intentions. Research shows that these two things account for 80 to 90 per cent of a first impression.’

So how do we make sure we rate well? One way is to let the other person speak first or have the floor first. ‘You can do this by simply asking them a question,’ says Cuddy. ‘People make the mistake, especially in business, of thinking that everything is negotiation. They think, “I better get the floor first so that I can be in charge of what happens.” The problem with this is that you don’t make the other person feel warmth toward you. Warmth is really about making the other person feel understood.’

Research proves that five minutes of chit-chat before a negotiation increases the amount of value that’s created in the negotiation.

6

Strike a pose

Amy Cuddy’s TED Talk on body language and how it affects how others see us has been viewed 24 million times. Her research found that participants who sat or stood in a high-power pose for just two minutes, resembled

powerful people after just two minutes.

They felt more willing to take risks, presented ideas with greater confidence, performed better when in demanding situations, and experienced increases in testosterone, a hormone linked to assertiveness, and decreases in cortisol, linked to stress. In other words, two minutes of ‘power-posing’ prepares the brain to function well in high-stakes challenges. Try a Wonder Woman pose. Stand with your feet apart and your hands on your hips. Or sit with your legs in front, feet propped up on a desk, leaning back, with your hands on the back of your head, fingers interlaced, and elbows out.

7

Be kind

If you want greater collaboration and trust, then have a positive communication style, say Judith and Richard Glaser, in their study published in *The Harvard Business Review*.

They discovered that colleagues who demonstrated curiosity, concern and listened well, painted a picture of mutual success (using the word ‘we’), and were open to having difficult conversations, had the effect of producing oxytocin (the feel-good hormone) in their workmates.

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WORK

Master the art of planning

Every month, **Oliver Burkeman** invites you to improve your work life

1 THE PROJECT

Why do we chronically underestimate how long tasks will take, or feel paralysed by indecision over which project to tackle first? There's an art to planning well. And no, mastering it won't turn you into an unspontaneous robot.

2 THE AIM

One potential pitfall is the 'planning fallacy' – we tend to be over-optimistic about how long something will take. In one study, students estimated they'd complete an essay an average of 10 days before deadline; in reality, the average was one day. Things always take longer than you think – part of the problem is that emotions blow your reasoning skills off course; when you really want something to be finished by Thursday, it's easy to persuade yourself it *can* be.

3 THE THEORY

The crucial habit worth developing is a short weekly planning session – half an hour might be enough – when you can take an 'aerial view' of your work, like an air traffic controller. Otherwise, you'll only make a plan when you're overwhelmed, which is when you are most vulnerable to the planning fallacy. List all projects, make a schedule assigning specific times to tasks – and add at least 25 per cent to your estimates of time required. Don't try to convince yourself that this once, you'll do more in less time – that's the planning fallacy again. And don't worry that scheduling life will drain it of fun; on the contrary, giving your days more structure will free you from constantly having to decide what to do next.



NOW TRY IT OUT

- **Schedule 'slack time.'** Author Laura Vanderkam rarely schedules any work for Fridays – not because she's lazy, but because she knows work from the previous four days will spill over. Even if your job won't allow that, consider scheduling a few hours a week as protected 'slack time' to catch up.
- **Refocus every hour.** Set your phone to ring every hour, time coach Peter Bregman suggests, then, when you hear it, take a deep breath and ask if you're currently doing what needs doing most. That way, your plan won't become a distant memory.
- **Replace your to-do list with a 'will-do' list.** Abandon those 30-item daily lists that you never get close to finishing. Instead, pick fewer items than you think you can manage – five, for example – but really commit to doing them all. In the long run, you'll get more done.

OLIVER BURKEMAN is the author of 'The Antidote: Happiness For People Who Can't Stand Positive Thinking' (Canongate, £8.99)

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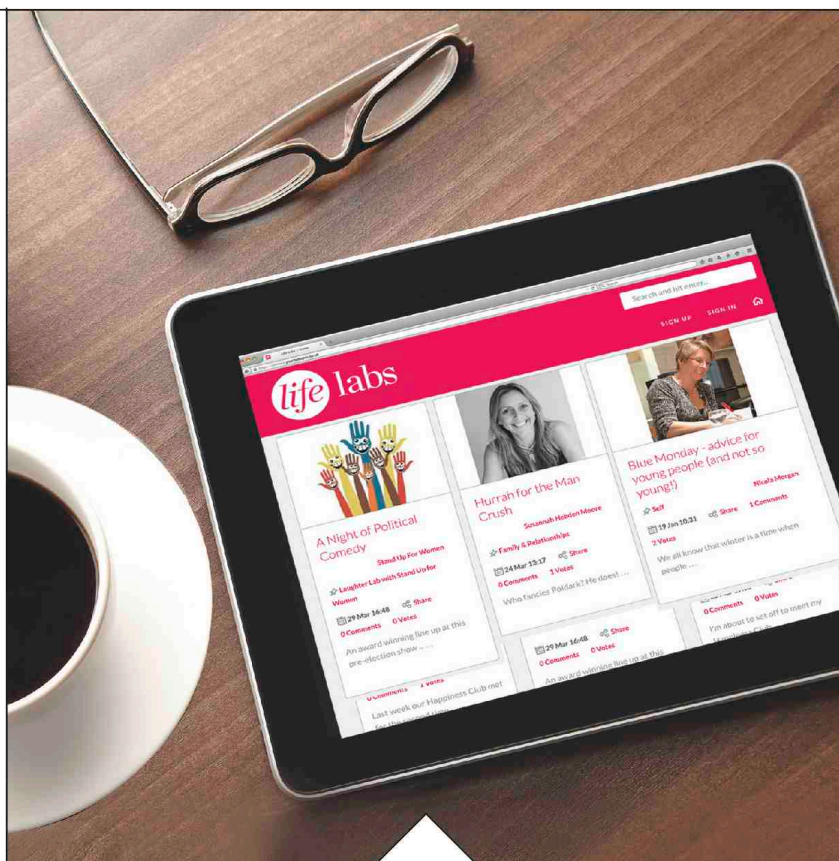
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“I love sex but I can’t find a partner”

Embrace your sexuality, says Esther Perel, but if you want to find a long-term relationship, you need to try a different approach when dating



ESTHER PEREL is a psychologist, author and speaker regarded as one of the world's most insightful voices on sexuality

GOT A QUESTION FOR ESTHER?
Email esther@psychologies.co.uk, with 'ESTHER' in the subject line

Rachel, 29, tells me: 'I'm single and I love sex. I love the skin-on-skin contact, and also the orgasms. But it's not helping me find a boyfriend. I sleep with men on the first date, but then I find they don't want to see me again.'

Rachel has been single for eight years and says: 'I'm a lusty woman in my twenties, and I want to have sex. What's wrong with that? But I feel judged by men when they don't contact me again.'

It doesn't sound to me that the men necessarily judge Rachel, but perhaps the men were just interested in sex and not a relationship. That said, when we invite people for dinner, we enjoy receiving a thank-you note that acknowledges the pleasure of being together. So I understand Rachel's disappointment, and her feeling of being dismissed afterwards.

Unfortunately, in our culture we can easily feel disposed of, replaced and insignificant. Too often people lack the kindness and grace that should accompany a sexual encounter, even if it is a recreational one. So many women (and men) wonder the next day if the pleasure of the encounter was mutual.

I wish I could say, 'What's wrong with being a lustful woman?' Feminism has

brought women more equality, more dignity, and more power. But still, the playing field is not equal. Many women hope that if they offer themselves sexually, love will flourish. I wonder sometimes to what extent the scarcity of sex in the past forced men to be more patient; to romance, to put more emphasis on foreplay. And I don't mean the five minutes before penetration – I mean the entire seduction dance.

Therefore, I say if Rachel does not feel 100 per cent OK after an encounter, then these sexual trysts may not be for her. If it's truly pleasurable (and I'm all for enjoying sex and exploring your sexuality), then she should feel good about having these experiences.

I also hear she wants a relationship and she has noticed a pattern. When she has sex the first night, it doesn't turn into a relationship. To me, if something isn't working, it makes sense to try a new approach. So if she holds off, she will own the situation. I'm not saying Rachel needs to play hard to get; I'm saying that if a guy is interested in a relationship with her, he'd have the patience to wait for sex (how long depends on Rachel and that guy).

Rachel needs to start by getting to know the guy, see if she likes him, if she

enjoys his company. That is quite different from gauging if you are attracted to someone or making sure that he is attracted to you. Discovering your similarity of interests and values, the sense that he is interested in you the person and not as a means to an end – all of these are better predictors of qualities that lead to having a relationship.

If Rachel is sexually frustrated after one of these nights of meeting up with a man and getting to know him, I'm sure she knows how to pleasure herself! Maybe think of it as teasing herself until she can have him. Soon, but not now.

It's just a matter of trying out a different approach – the definition of madness is doing the same thing over and over, but expecting different results.

MORE INSPIRATION

Log on: estherperelclasses.com
Read: *Fear Of Flying* by Erica Jong (Vintage, £8.99)

Our agony aunt **Mary Fenwick** offers a new perspective on your challenges and problems



MARY FENWICK is a business coach, journalist, fundraiser, mother, divorcee and widow

GOT A QUESTION FOR MARY?
Email mary@psychologies.co.uk, with 'MARY' in the subject line

“How can I get on with my sister?”

Q My twin sister and I are about to turn 30, but we don't get on. She thinks I'm demanding and that I hate pretty much everything about her. I think she's self-obsessed and creates too much drama. We can't even seem to have a conversation without it erupting into an argument because there's too much history of resentment. I've tried to let it go and start afresh, but her constant bad behaviour towards our family makes it impossible. She ignores me every time I try to suggest that we go to counselling together. I don't want to give up on the possibility that we could be closer, but I can't see how things could ever improve. Is there anything I can do?
Name supplied

A Thank you for a question that has prompted fascinating conversations whenever I have shared it. It seems to be an incredibly common story to have a certain person in our family about whom we think 'if only X was different, it would all be OK'. If you appealed for testimony, I'm sure you

would get any number of witnesses in my own family to talk about my bad behaviour, too. I imagine that all of this is particularly intense as twins, and there may be part of you that feels your sister represents your face to the world as well.

Please may I gently challenge some assumptions in your letter? First, I wonder about the timing. Is turning 30 supposed to usher in some magical age of peace and tolerance? You share that birthday, but is there any way of celebrating the fact that you are different people, and not just defined by being twins?

Secondly, I'm uneasy about the idea that your sister's behaviour is impossible to ignore. We are not amoebae; we do have a choice. What exactly happens if you just watch or listen, but don't act? Who says that it's always your job to defend others? These are the words that I say to myself when I become aware of being pulled in to something I don't like: 'let go of the rope'.

Thirdly, I don't know why any counselling needs to be together. If we think of this as a chemical reaction beyond your immediate control, then each of the elements, separately, affects the equation as a whole. If you

hold on to the power of changing yourself, that will change the interaction with your sister.

I have mentioned Kristin Neff before, and the idea of self-compassion. I often listen to her guided meditations, and her soft American accent has become embedded in my brain. When she says 'you're an imperfect being', I hear it as 'you're an imperfect bean' and I think of the embryo we see on antenatal scans, which does look like a tiny broad bean.

You and your sister began as beans together. You had no choice about that, but you do have choices now. If you are open to the idea that counselling might help, and you are willing to give it a go, that is all you need. Find a therapist or counsellor through the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (see 'More Inspiration, opposite), particularly humanistic or integrative approaches.

Wishing you a very happy birthday, and a fabulous next 30 years.

“Our families disapprove of our relationship”

Q My boyfriend and I have been going out for four years; we are very much in love, and have been talking about getting married.

However, we have different faiths and my family has made it perfectly clear that they will never accept our relationship. My boyfriend told me that his family has given us their blessing, but he has now decided that he is not in favour of a civil ceremony, mainly because he thinks it likely that my family will harm his family if he marries me in a ceremony that is not religious. I have a feeling that his family are talking him out of it because they fear for their safety. Are we getting

in too deep? I'm not sure what to do any more. **Name supplied**

A You cannot think straight about your relationship with your boyfriend with these fears in the background, and I urge you to talk this situation through with someone you can really trust.

I have alarm bells sounding in my head about your use of the word 'harm' here, which would take us into a zone beyond my opinion and into a matter of law. In the UK, the threat of violence is a crime, whether or not it is carried out. In your case, it sounds to me as if the situation could be called 'honour-based', although I'm always reluctant to use that phrase because it implies

that I agree with this definition of honour.

You are not alone, although I would guess that you are feeling very isolated right now. The most immediate way to talk to someone is probably through the Karma Nirvana helpline (see 'More Inspiration', below). This is a charity set up by and for women who seek to take charge of their own choice about marriage. They promise not to talk to your family, and could talk through your options for support.

I am sorry that you face this painful time, and grateful that you have taken the first step of writing to me. Please put your own oxygen mask on first, before you worry about your boyfriend's family.

“I'm the only single person I know”

Q My friend who, until recently, was the last single person in my friendship group, has just started dating someone, which makes me, more or less, the only single person I know now. She suggested that I shouldn't have so many criteria when it comes to potential partners and perhaps that's why I'm still single. Because all my friends are coupled up, I am spending more time with my mum, who also told me I'm being too fussy. I've taken these comments as a huge insult. It's as if they think I should just take whoever comes along – I do desperately want to find someone, but I don't see why I should settle for second best. What should I do? **Name supplied**

A I read your letter when I had just flown to the other side of the world, which meant that my calendar skipped the day that would have been the anniversary of my husband's death. And then the jetlag meant waking up every day in time to see the sun rise. In this daily miracle of dawn, your letter was in the back of my mind and I kept asking myself if this experience would be better if I was sharing it with someone else. And the conclusion I came to was no – it might well be different, but it wouldn't necessarily be better. I know that the times I've felt loneliest were in a bad relationship, or when I forgot what mattered to me, and those two things often go together.

This is a great time to explore what *does* matter to you, as a whole person,

not just as a single person. Please take my full permission, if that's what you need, to be as fussy as you like. What your friend or your mother are saying are not the only definitions of you – in fact, I hope you won't ever leave it up to a single other person to define who you are.

How about trying one tiny, fun, new thing every day and let's watch this space?

MORE INSPIRATION

Download Kristin Neff – the meditation I use is on the free Insight Timer app: 'Loving-Kindness with Self-Compassion'

Research therapists at bacp.co.uk

Get support Karma Nirvana can be contacted on 0800 599 9247 or at karmanirvana.org.uk



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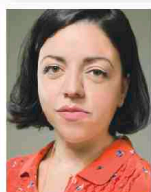
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In partnership with NOW Live Events, we are delighted to offer two life-changing workshops – with Eminé Ali Rushton, our very own beauty and wellbeing director, introducing us to the principles of Ayurveda, and positive psychology expert Vanessa King, showing us how to make the most of our strengths. Plus, we look ahead to the HowTheLightGetsIn festival that we'll be attending in May

LISTEN TO SUZY GREAVES INTERVIEWING OUR EXPERTS AT LIFELABS.PSYCHOLOGIES.CO.UK

MAY WORKSHOP

The Balance Plan: boost your body and mind with Ayurveda



DATE: 14 May 2015
VENUE: Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1 4RL
TIME: 7pm-8.30pm
COST: £18

Psychologies' beauty and wellbeing director Eminé Ali Rushton introduces the principles of Ayurveda – an ancient, sensitive and kind health system that is the ideal antidote to frenzied modern life. During interactive exercises, learn what your unique constitution says about you (your *dosha*) and how you can make practical, supportive life-changes. This session will begin and end with meditation led by renowned yoga teacher, Selda Enver Goodwin.

THIS WORKSHOP WILL HELP YOU LEARN:

- How food can be your medicine.
- What your unique body type needs in order to become balanced.
- How supporting your body with the right tastes can transform your wellbeing.
- How yoga and meditation can become an instinctive part of daily life.
- Why you crave certain foods, and what this tells you about your body.

JUNE WORKSHOP

Making the Most of Your Strengths



DATE: 9 June 2015
VENUE: Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1 4RL
TIME: 7pm-8.30pm
COST: £18

What are your greatest strengths and how are you using them in your life? What are the best things about you and how could you bring them out more?

Often our focus is on what isn't right with us. Scientific research shows that becoming more aware of our strengths and using them has lots of benefits, like making us more happy, confident and more likely to be successful at home and at work.

Leading this session is Vanessa King, positive psychology expert and director of workplaces for Action for Happiness. Vanessa works with many organisations identifying and developing talent.

THIS INTERACTIVE SESSION WILL HELP YOU:

- Identify your signature strengths and reflect on how you currently use them in your life.
- Explore ideas to use your strengths more often and in new and creative ways.
- Leave with a personal action plan, having gained more energy, and hopefully made new connections, too.



MAY FESTIVAL

HowTheLightGetsIn

DATE: 21-31 May 2015
VENUE: Hay-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR3 5GB
COST: Sessions from £7

Psychologies is delighted to be partnering again with HowtheLightGetsIn this year. It's the world's largest philosophy and music festival, and this year the theme is 'Fantasy and Reality'. Join us at our debate on Desire, Dreams and Happiness. Many think that wealth, love and fame bring happiness,

but Proust warned that while desire makes life blossom, possession makes it wither. Is there more value in desire and aspiration than in arrival? And if so, should we seek better dreams and fantasies to enrich our lives? Radical sociologist Steve Fuller, erotic capital theorist Catherine Hakim, and psychiatrist and chair of the Mental Health Foundation Dinesh Bhugra seek answers. Plus, join us for our live Happiness Club lunch with Action for Happiness' positive psychologist Vanessa King.

For more information and to book tickets and accommodation, see howthelightgetsin.iai.tv

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PHOTOGRAPHS: CORBIS, PÅL HANSEN

“Emotions make us human.
Denying them makes us beasts”

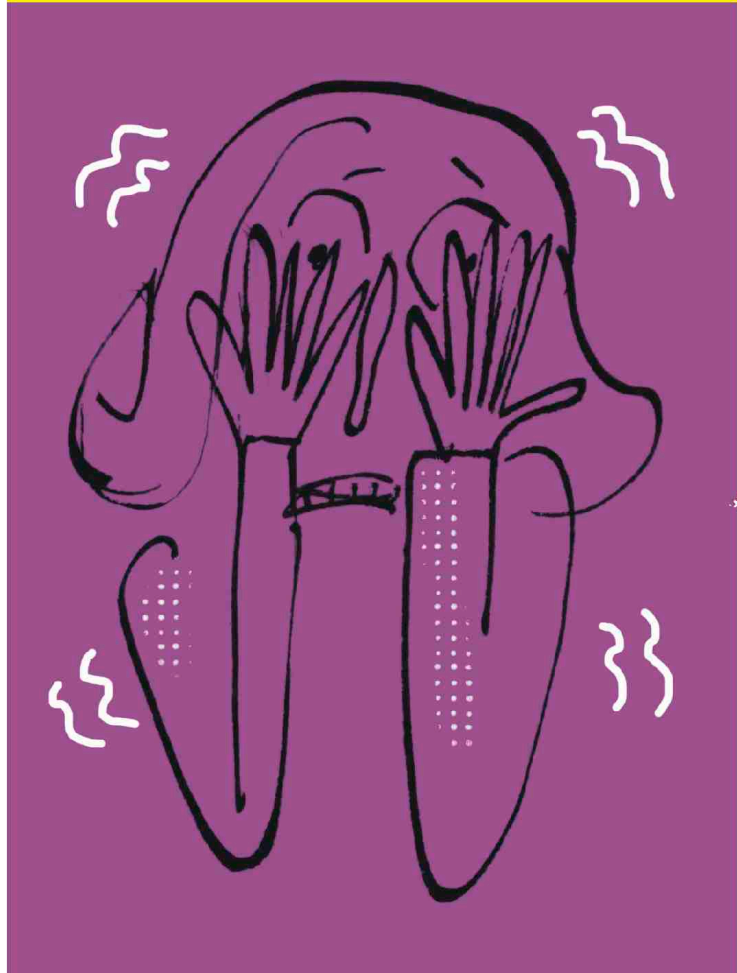
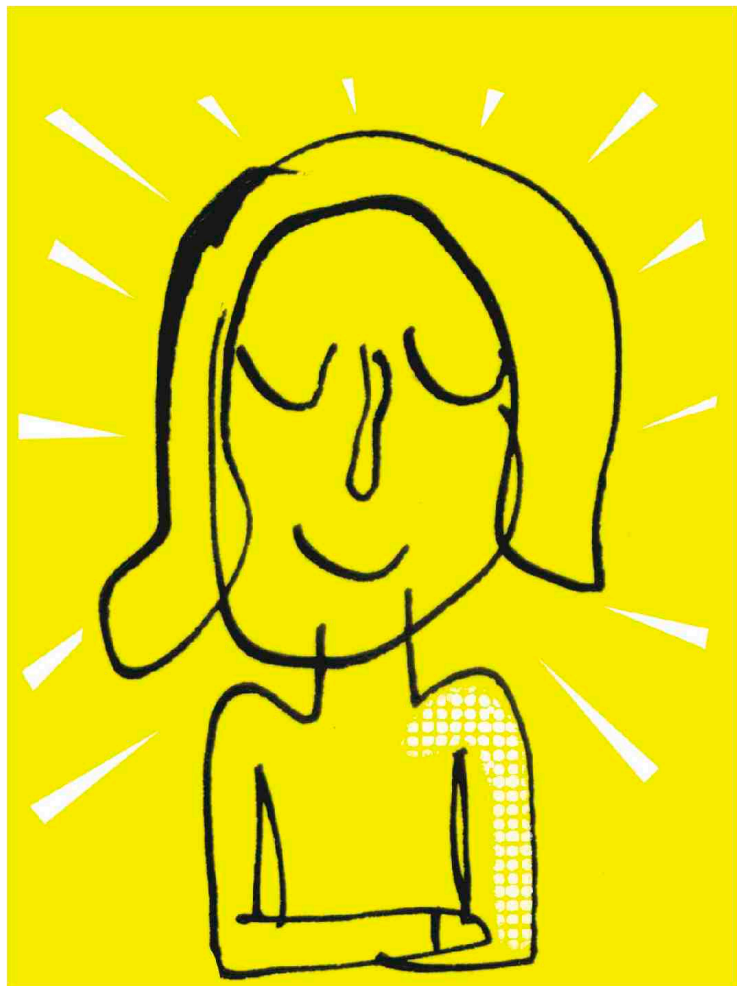
Victoria Klein, author and yoga teacher

Powerful emotions

Engulfed in a state of exuberant joy, swarming with jealousy, or paralysed by jittery over-excitement... every day, even hour to hour, our internal emotional mood board changes, reacting to the triumphs and challenges of life. But society tells us to keep calm and carry on. We are advised not to display our feelings to save face – and to be ‘emotional’, particularly at work (and particularly as a woman), is a dangerous thing.

Yet our emotions are important for communication, for our survival and for our understanding of ourselves. This month, we are embracing our strong, powerful emotions, and using them to our advantage. We invite you to open up with us...

ILLUSTRATIONS SERGE BLOCH



THE POWER OF EMOTION

What if we thought of emotionality as a sign of health, or even better, a source of power? Could identifying, embracing and being open about the emotions we feel be the key to better relationships and working lives? Anita Chaudhuri investigates how to use our powerful emotions for our benefit...

The other day, I bumped into a former colleague. ‘How are you?’ she asked, as we hadn’t seen each other in a while. For some reason her question caught me off-guard. How was I? Running through a mental checklist, a number of possible answers came to mind. At that precise moment I was happy (the sun was shining, I was going out for a glass of wine), sad (a recent bereavement), anxious (too much life admin), stressed (too much work), excited (a hot date looming), inspired (a new project) and impatient (my default setting).

Obviously, I didn’t say any of that. ‘I’m fine,’ I replied. ‘And you?’

Later, when I was slumped on the sofa watching a sitcom followed by a nail-biting crime drama, something occurred to me. As human beings, we are the only species (or, at least, the only one we currently know about), that has at its disposal this vast ocean of emotional responses. Yet we spend far more time vicariously consuming other people’s emotions (via TV, novels, iTunes, even karaoke), than communicating our own.

Psychotherapist Maxine Harley explains that there is a very good reason for this – we fear losing control.

‘Powerful emotions can often make us feel like we’ve gone into a trance-like state where we don’t feel like our usual selves. When we get lost in such emotions, we can fear losing control,’ she explains. ‘It’s as if our capacity for judgment, reasoning, planning and reflection are all being challenged. We often feel changed by such feelings. It’s like a different part of us shows up; maybe one resurrected from the past, particularly in the case of unpleasant feelings.’

“There are emotions that we all probably don’t want to express, and others that we’re a bit confused about. Maybe we don’t know what we’re supposed to do with them”

Even good feelings such as love, joy, bliss, excitement and awe can make us feel a bit uncomfortable because of that swept away, out-of-control sensation.

So that being the case, how can we deal with such feelings when they show up? And, let’s face it, they do have a habit of showing up, uninvited, at the most inconvenient moments. Tiffany

Watt-Smith is a researcher at the Centre for History of the Emotions at Queen Mary University, London. ‘It can help to think about different words for emotions,’ she says. ‘When we give something a name, we bring it into focus. Most of us need to expand our vocabulary into much broader terms than the six basic emotions which experts usually cite: happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise and disgust. There are many more subtle, strange emotions. You can feel a bit miffed, feel dismay, or homefulness – the emotion that describes the feeling of relief when you arrive at the end of your street – or maybe basorexia (the sudden desire to kiss someone). Then, there are culturally specific emotions like *schadenfreude* (pleasure derived from the misfortunes of others).’

MORE THAN ONE AT A TIME

Watt-Smith has written a forthcoming book *The Book Of Human Emotion: An Encyclopedia Of Feeling from Anger To Wanderlust* (Profile Books, £14.99, out in September), which identifies 150 different emotions. ‘It’s unusual to only experience one emotion at a time,’ she explains. ‘You don’t just feel jealous, you feel jealous and guilty. You don’t just feel cross, you feel cross and resentful and possibly a little sad. Emotions >>>

Happiness



fear



>>> don't come in single file; they're much more like clouds, they blur together and morph apart – always shifting, depending on the context and the meaning that you give them. It's actually very hard to capture them into narrow categories.'

So what should we do to get a handle on our feelings? 'Personally, I've found that thinking about emotions in detail and trying to understand why I might feel a certain way is helpful. I like to name my feelings like a wine-taster might name the different flavour sensations going on with a particular grape,' says Watt-Smith. 'I also try and understand what I feel about that particular emotion. OK, I feel angry. Am I ashamed of being angry? Am I not angry at all, but jealous? Give yourself time to think about a feeling rather than rushing to label it. Doing this won't make the feeling go away – nor would you want it to – but it does feel a little less overwhelming. In my view, thinking about an emotion involves considering your physical body, your psychology and your culture, as well as politics, gender and class.'

WHY ARE WE EMOTIONAL?

We experience emotions for very sound reasons, of course. In evolutionary terms, they exist to protect us from danger and keep us safe. But there is more to it than that. Writing in *Psychology Today*, Matthew Hutson, author of *7 Laws Of Magical Thinking* (Oneworld, £8.99), recently described it thus: 'Beneath the surface, every emotion orchestrates a complex suite of changes. Each component of every emotion has a critical job to do – whether that's preparing us to move toward what we want (anger), urging us to improve our standing (envy), or allowing us to undo some social gaffe (embarrassment).'

Although we might think that emotions are something that just happen to us, it's worth exploring how we are

quick to claim certain pet emotions and avoid owning up to others. 'We often talk about emotions as if we're passive creatures,' says psychologist Todd Kashdan, co-author of *The Power Of Negative Emotions* (Oneworld, £8.99). 'But we have attitudes and values towards those emotions. There are some that each of us probably don't want to express, and others that we're a bit confused about. Maybe we don't know what we're supposed to do with them. Or we might feel uncomfortable with feelings such as guilt or anger.'

Kashdan asserts that there are good

"We spend so much time trying to be happy that it can be problematic. We can't control other people, our hormones or the time of day, all of which can have a significant impact on our mood"

reasons for experiencing even negative emotions. 'Anger, for example, might be triggered by a sense of injustice or frustration that someone is blocking our goals,' he says. 'It is better not to conceal your emotions – even the difficult ones. For example, research indicates that the majority of the times when a person is the target of another's anger, the relationship is actually strengthened by the encounter.'

He believes that we are culturally conditioned to repress 'bad' emotions such as sadness, anger, guilt and regret. 'We're told that a cheerful, optimistic attitude is how you're ideally supposed to be on a regular basis,' he points out. 'But we spend so much time trying to be happy that it can be problematic. We can't control other people, our hormones or the time of day, all of which

can have a significant impact on our mood. We need to recognise that trying to be happy each moment of the day is the enemy of ambition and hard work.'

'HYSTERICAL' WOMEN

For women, we run the risk of being branded 'hysterical' if we let rip with our more, er, explosive emotions in public. Perhaps because of this, many women feel ashamed of occasional bursts of volatility. All the more refreshing then to hear from psychiatrist Julie Holland, author of *Moody Bitches* (Thorsons, £12.99), on the topic. 'Women's emotionality is a sign of health, not disease. It is a source of power. Be we are under constant pressure to restrain our emotional lives,' she says. 'We've been taught to apologise for our tears, to suppress our anger and to fear being called hysterical.'

Far from encouraging us to treat those hormonally haywire days of the cycle as a write-off, Holland suggests that what we feel on those days is, in fact, our deepest truth and it's our more muted, reasonable selves that are not to be trusted. 'In the days leading up to menstruation, when emotional sensitivity is heightened, women may feel less insulated, more irritable or dissatisfied,' she says. 'I tell my patients that the thoughts and feelings that come up during this phase are genuine, and perhaps it's best to re-evaluate what they put up with for the rest of the month, when their hormone and neurotransmitter levels are more likely programmed to prompt them to be accommodating to others' demands and needs.'

Some stereotypes about emotions and gender can be deeply unhelpful. 'There are cultural norms which are pernicious,' agrees Watt-Smith. 'For example, men get mad and women get sad. They lead people to believe that those states are normal. Researching the history of emotions, I discovered >>>

>>> how cultural norms change over time. For example, during the great flourishing of romantic love in the 12th century, yawning was seen as an expression of love – presumably because there was this idea that a man had to wait patiently for the object of his desire to return his affection.'

THE WORK PROBLEM

Nowhere does the stereotype of the hysterical woman loom larger than in the workplace. If a woman expresses anger – or worse, tears – at the office, she risks becoming a figure of ridicule. But Kashdan believes that suppressing emotions at work creates problems and is bad for organisations. 'This whole culture of "let's not talk about anything that's affecting us that's unrelated to the actual job" is so unhelpful,' he says. 'If people are less productive and communicate less because they have unspoken emotions, their work is going to suffer.'

He believes that concealing your emotions at work makes it much harder to get through the day. 'There's actually a term for it from the service industry – emotional labour,' he continues. 'We should be aiming for more candour, more face-to-face conversations with managers about how we're being affected by colleagues or work issues, and less gossiping behind people's backs and whispering in corridors.'

But how on earth might we go about doing that? 'Well, you could bring the other person's defences right down by opening things up. Say: "This is actually a hard conversation to have, and I'm a bit worried about having it, but..." Let them know that you'll be more efficient and effective in your job once you've got the matter off your chest,' Kashdan advises.

According to Kashdan, this isn't just about identifying your emotions and your attitude towards them, it's about

"We do need to challenge ourselves emotionally. Only by going there will we develop wisdom and maturity"

getting comfortable with discomfort. 'In order to make the best decisions in life, often we have no choice but to sit with stress, anxiety or risk. So we do need to challenge ourselves emotionally. Only by going there will we develop wisdom and maturity. We shouldn't steal people's ability to have moments of self-doubt. We limit our ability to become psychologically flexible if we don't experiment with different emotional states,' he says.

Experimenting with unfamiliar emotional states can be incredibly helpful for those of us who tend to allow certain favourite emotions to become part of our identity. Harley explains: 'When you allow powerful emotions to

become your default position, or attach them to your self-concept, that can be very limiting. And we all know people who do this – they continually refer to themselves as a constant worrier, for example, or as a drama queen, a jealous Scorpio or a loose cannon.'

There are times, of course, when powerful emotions are a sign that we need to pay attention; that something is going on in our lives. 'Sometimes, experiencing an unpleasant emotion can be a red flag to unhealed emotional wounds. You may be over-reacting in the present moment because it has triggered something from your past,' explains Harley.

Taking time to distance ourselves from our feelings is vital in such cases. 'We need to get back into the driving seat of our life and refocus on now, rather than getting overwhelmed. Negative emotions can become burned into the mind when allowed to dominate and perspective becomes out of balance. So catch them early and put them in their place within the bigger picture of your life,' advises Harley.

DECODING YOUR EMOTIONS by Todd Kashdan

● **Learn to clearly label and describe the emotions you are feeling as you go through your day. Pay close attention to the linguistic shortcuts that you most overuse – for example, 'I've had a bad day' or 'I'm stressed'.**

● **Ask yourself, what do you honestly mean by such phrases? Unpack the hidden emotions. Were you angry, bored, sad, guilty, anxious, fearful or disgusted? Or were you embarrassed, but blocked that out with a more familiar emotion, such as frustration?**

● **Think about those emotions that you have now named. Which ones would you say were most dominant,**

and which the more subtle? Which one do you experience most often? And which are the most uncomfortable emotions for you to own up to? Why is that, do you think?

● **Now look at your list of emotions. For each one, ask yourself, what is that emotion actually pushing me to do? Do you, perhaps, lose your temper, write a letter, take a stand, pour a drink, try to ignore it or phone your mother? Take note.**

● **What are some concrete next steps that you might take in your daily life now that you are armed with this emotional intelligence?**

ANALYSIS

UNCOMFORTABLY NUMB?

What happens when, contrary to boiling over with emotion, we simply feel nothing? Showing up in a variety of ways, emotional numbness – such as feeling demotivated, bored or even physically cold – is an important sign, says Dr Peter R. Breggin

WORDS ALI ROFF

1 THE TRUTH ABOUT
NUMBED FEELINGS

We've all experienced those bad days at work; we get home and become distant and unaffectionate towards our loved ones in the evening. 'It's difficult to suppress one strong emotion without suppressing them all,' explains Dr Peter Breggin, author of *Guilt, Shame And Anxiety: Understanding And Overcoming Negative Emotions* (Prometheus Books, £15.99). When, for example, we try to quash the anger and anxiety that we feel at being stressed, we also banish the love, happiness and other positive emotions we have along with it.

'We feel "out of touch" with ourselves, and lack motivation. We may say that we feel bored, but human beings are far too full of vitality to feel bored. Instead, self-defeating emotions are suppressing us and sapping our vitality,' Breggin points out. By numbing our negative feelings, it can be difficult to experience any emotion at all.

2 WHY WE CAN FEEL
EMOTIONALLY NUMB

Remoteness from our emotions can arise from a number of situations, but the underlying factor is a fear of experiencing our feelings. Breggin cites one example as stress which can lead to irrational anger and numbing. 'Fear of

our own anger can make us feel out of touch or numb,' he explains. Dealing with other people's anger can have the same effect, leading us to feel threatened and emotionally to pull back. 'We want to shut down our feelings to reduce the suffering,' adds Breggin.

"Feeling our own feelings allows us to have empathy for other people, and to keep emotional connections with others, too"

3 WHY IT'S USEFUL

Numbing our feelings doesn't mean we are devoid of emotion. 'Remember – you wouldn't feel numb if you hadn't any suppressed feelings crying for release,' explains Breggin. The amount of anger we are suppressing equals the potential we have inside for positive feelings. It's good news. Breggin says: 'Think of it this way, the degree of your numbness reflects the degree of your suppressed passions. You have so much emotional potential that it has caused a reactive shutdown.' We believe that we feel nothing when, in fact, it's exactly the opposite.

4 HOW TO UNLEASH
YOUR EMOTIONS

The first step, Breggin advises, is to recognise that we are feeling numb, withdrawn or out of touch with ourselves. Then the second step is to reject this as an approach to dealing with our emotions by refusing to deceive ourselves. We must then reverse the numbing withdrawal process by finding trusted people who we can connect with. 'Getting in touch with our feelings is likely to require learning to trust people again,' says Breggin.

5 THE IMPORTANCE
OF FEELING YOUR
FEELINGS

Feeling emotionally numb is detrimental to the people around us. 'When we grow out of touch with our own feelings, we also lose touch with the feelings of the people around us,' Breggin notes. We can be unaware of how we are harming other people. 'Even when a friend is being especially considerate or caring, you do not know how to respond,' he continues. Feeling our own feelings allows us to have empathy for other people, and keep emotional connections with others, too.

Adapted from 'Guilt, Shame And Anxiety: Understanding And Overcoming Negative Emotions' by Peter R. Breggin (Prometheus Books, £15.99).

Q&A

REFRAME YOUR EMOTIONS

How can we understand our emotions better and work out how to use them? Mark Tyrrell, an experienced therapist and author of *New Ways Of Seeing: The Art Of Therapeutic Reframing*, explains how to view emotions anew

INTERVIEW ALI ROFF

What is reframing and how does it work?

We all look for meaning in our lives; we are 'meaning-making'. Events don't just happen to us and then we move on; we tend to put a frame round them. That seems like a cognitive thing, but it's actually more emotional. For instance, someone may have been put down at work. They could interpret that to mean that no-one likes them, or that bullies always target them, or that they are terrible at their work. So from one incident, you might get lots of different meanings, and this becomes habitual.

People with low self-esteem will often put a meaning or a frame around their experience that disempowers them. So they might blame themselves exclusively when a relationship ends, for example. Or they might globalise a one-off negative event to cover everything: 'I failed my maths exam, so I'm an idiot'. Not 'I'm an idiot at maths', but 'I'm a complete idiot'. So the negative is globalised, internalised and often stabilised: 'Nothing good ever happens to me. Things have always been bad, and will never get better'. The bad thing is framed as permanent, whereas a good thing is framed as fragile and impermanent, for example: 'It's too good to last'. Notice we never say, 'It's too bad to last'.

Reframing is to put a new frame around an experience that is less disempowering and more empowering, and also more realistic and balanced.

How do we do it?

A reframe needs to appeal to the pre-existing interests of a particular person. Take the feeling of over-excitement. You can't concentrate, you get ahead of yourself... A car driver might resonate with thinking about excitement as fuel in a

car, we might steadily drive at 30 miles an hour, sitting in cruise-control, or we can over-rev the engine, which could damage the car, pollute the atmosphere, and cause us to run out of petrol more quickly.

Now think about the phrase: panic attack. It's a frame and a metaphor – and not a very reassuring one. We aren't actually *attacked* by panic. But panic attacks are a bit like the alarm on a car – very effective if someone is trying to steal it, but if it's the type of alarm that goes off with a gust of wind, then perhaps we need to do something about the alarm, so that it only sounds when it really needs to.

We've taken the pattern of a panic attack and we've put it into a non-emotional context, reframed it and put it into a metaphor which gives us a new hope that we can reset our own emotional alarm.

"Reframing makes an experience less disempowering and more empowering – and also more realistic and balanced"

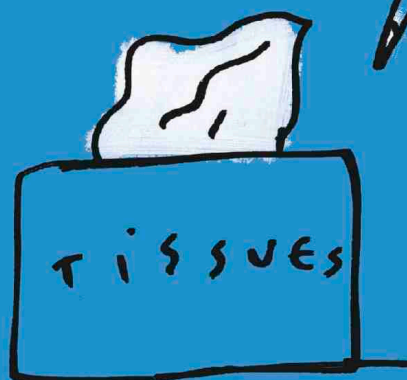
How can we apply this to reframing our strong emotions?

The important thing to remember is that emotions can block rational thinking. We can experience emotional hijacking where our amygdala [the flight-or-fight

part of the brain] and the stress hormone cortisol, inhibit the functioning of the strategic part of the brain, so things become all-or-nothing. It's only when events calm down that you get access to the thinking part of the brain again, and you are able to see all the gradations of reality rather than the extremes.

So as far as reframing is concerned, the last thing we want to do is contradict somebody's strong emotional state while they are in it. It's no use telling someone to calm down when they are angry – it's patronising and it only makes them more angry. Often, we have to join reality before we can present a new way of seeing.

Sadness



What if we understand the reframe in our minds, but not in our hearts?

This so often happens. If someone feels like they are the most incompetent person at work, they might intellectually know they are not, but they *feel* they are. Reframing needs to appeal to the emotional mind. It can be difficult to change your feelings while you are emotionally charged.

Is there a tool we can use ourselves to reframe emotional situations that we are having?

Being self-analytical when you experience an emotion has the effect of diluting the feeling, because you are using a part of the brain that isn't usually accessed during emotion.

So, for example, if you are prone to anxiety, and you are about to give a public presentation and you are nervous about speaking, then you might grade the level of anxiety. You might say 'complete terror' is 10, and 'completely relaxed' – too relaxed to make the speech – is one. You might be at a six or a seven. This does two things: it gives you back a sense of control, but it also puts you in what we call the 'observing self', the part of yourself that can see the emotion from the outside. And that simple thing can dilute the emotion. You might find here, that you now feel like a five. And what's made you a five is that you've stepped outside of the emotion.

Can we help other people reframe their emotions when they come to us for help or advice?

We have to have empathy for other people's emotions, and connect with their feelings and their reality, but we can look at the pattern that is emerging for them.

I worked with a couple who had lost their daughter to cancer the year before. They felt guilty when they weren't thinking about her, so they were grieving for her all the time. They were exhausted; they couldn't do anything else. We had to take their pattern and put it into a non-emotional context. I suggested that an athlete needs to train and eat properly in order to perform well. I asked them what else an athlete needed to do in order to be a better athlete. They said that they would also need to have enough rest. I suggested then they themselves needed to get enough rest too in order to grieve well. In some ways, when they weren't thinking about or grieving for their daughter, it meant they were grieving more purely for her when they *were* thinking about her. It was a bit of a weird metaphor, but they really took it on board. They stopped feeling guilty that they hadn't thought about her for 10 minutes, and began to see it as something that fed into grieving more effectively, allowing them to manage it better.

New Ways Of Seeing: The Art Of Therapeutic Reframing by Mark Tyrrell (Uncommon Knowledge, £9.85), is out now

CASE STUDIES

FEEL YOUR FEELINGS

Because of diverse life experiences and varying levels of emotional resilience, we all have different relationships with our feelings. We hear three stories inspired by the challenging roles our emotions play in our lives

INTERVIEWS ANITA CHAUDHURI PHOTOGRAPHS REBECCA LUPTON

“Art was the one thing that made sense to me; it helped me feel relaxed and calm”

Naomi Robinson creates jewellery and ceramics with themes of loss and remembrance

‘I always found wearing jewellery to be comforting. If I was dealing with problems, playing with a pendant or a ring helped to calm me down.

My mum was diagnosed with cancer when I was 15. When things took a turn for the worse, the only thing I wanted to do was be there for her. I was 19 when she died and afterwards, I felt lost. Art was the one thing that made any sense to me; it helped me feel relaxed and calm. I studied ceramics, jewellery and textiles at university and, after I left, I started making decorative pieces. It came naturally to me.

The first piece I made involving someone’s emotions was very simple. A woman wanted something for her husband who had recently lost his mum. After we’d talked it through, I made two identical bowls. She had a hymn that she wanted to include, so I decorated the bowls with lines from the hymn with some of them legible and others hidden.

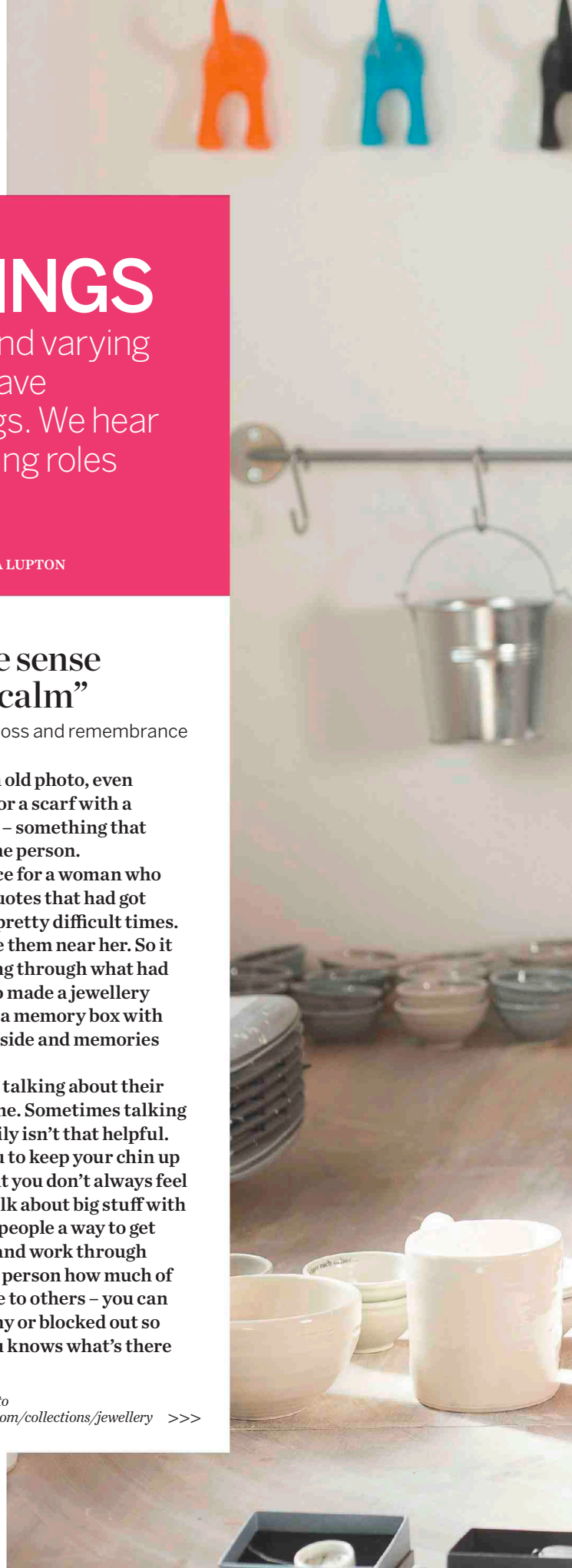
I think people find it easy to confide in me. When they first visit, I ask them to have something specific I can include in the piece – lyrics, prayers, poems,

imagery such as an old photo, even a piece of clothing or a scarf with a particular pattern – something that reminds them of the person.

I made a necklace for a woman who came to me with quotes that had got her through some pretty difficult times. She wanted to have them near her. So it was a case of talking through what had happened. I’ve also made a jewellery box which became a memory box with imagery on the outside and memories stored inside.

A big part of it is talking about their experiences with me. Sometimes talking to friends and family isn’t that helpful. They might tell you to keep your chin up and stay strong, but you don’t always feel you can actually talk about big stuff with them. I’m offering people a way to get those feelings out and work through them. It’s up to the person how much of the design is legible to others – you can make the words tiny or blocked out so no-one else but you knows what’s there – it’s your secret.’

For more information, go to naomirobinsonceramics.com/collections/jewellery >>>





THE DOSSIER

“The more difficulties I encounter, the more impermeable I’ve become”

Hugo Chittenden is a teacher, documentary-maker and founder of charitable organisation, The Volunteer

‘In 2008, I was 31, travelling around the world, building businesses. I felt I was invincible. Out of the blue, I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer.

Everything in my life crashed at the same time. I went bankrupt because I couldn’t work; I lost my fiancée.

I needed surgery fast. In hospital, I felt completely vulnerable. I remember the moment very well. Post-op, I was in a bad way, with drains coming out of my neck. It was the middle of the night; I couldn’t breathe properly and I was pressing the bell for the nurses, but no-one came. I thought to myself, whatever happens from now on in my life will just be a bonus. I’ve held on to that thought ever since. That realisation has made me adventurous and ambitious. It also galvanised me into action.

I started to think about volunteering and discovered a charity in Kenya that looks after orphans affected by HIV. Since then, I’ve done volunteer projects in Uganda, the Philippines, Haiti, Lebanon and Russia.

It’s been a massive learning curve but the more difficulties I’ve encountered in life, the more impermeable I’ve become. Now when bad things happen, I deal with them better. And that ability to weather strong emotions has really assisted me.

When I was in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake, I saw a lot of tragedy and devastation. The only way I could have dealt with it was by being able to handle my own emotions. I could do it because of the pain, hardship and illnesses I’d had myself.

I often look back and see my illness as a hugely positive change in my life; a change that I not only needed but that I was ready for.’

See thevolunteer.com. ‘The Volunteer’ by Hugo Chittenden (8 Books, £9.99) is out now.



“You get so focused on what you’re most scared of, you overlook the bigger picture”

Emma Kavanagh is a novelist who previously worked as a police and military psychologist, training personnel to deal with extreme situations

‘I’ve always had a fascination with the effects of trauma and how people operate in extreme situations. I’ve worked a lot with firearms policing where we would enact training sessions using actors as the “bad guys”. I remember one example where the armed men disappeared, running into a barn. The officers surrounded the door to the barn. I was standing further back and I could see that the bad guys had come through the barn and scrambled on the roof, now with a clear line of sight down to the officers on the ground. It would have put them in mortal danger.

I mention this because it illustrates how we all deal with strong emotions: it’s what we call “attentional spotlighting”. You get so focused on the thing you’re most scared of that you overlook the bigger picture.

Take something as mundane as a conversation. If someone says something threatening or makes us feel vulnerable, we’ll spotlight in on that and tune out everything else.

During my job I’ve spent a lot of time imagining the unimaginable. I used to run classes on what sort of interactions one could expect from a psychopathic hostage-taker, for example.

I had always wanted to be a writer but I remember being told that you had to “write what you know”. After I’d been doing consultancy for years, one day, a thought occurred to me: I know stuff now. I actually have stuff to write about. So I sat down and wrote a book. There is a definite catharsis in the act of writing. Putting emotions into words can help us to resolve and process a lot.’

Emma Kavanagh’s latest novel, ‘Hidden’ (Century, £18.99), is out now.



TEST

WHAT MAKES YOU SEE RED?

One minute we're cool, calm and collected; the next, it's as if someone has flipped a switch and we're consumed by involuntary feelings of rage. Discovering what sparks your powerful emotions can be a useful first step towards changing default behaviour patterns – take our test to find out what sparks your anger

1 You're at a restaurant and the waiter ignores you. You think:

- He's busy
- I'm obviously not important enough for him to notice
- ▲ He's bad at his job

2 Generally, if you are feeling het-up, to calm yourself down, you:

- Talk to someone or write down how you feel
- Set aside time to relax and reflect
- ▲ Try to think of an activity that will distract you from your mood

3 What's most likely to be the reason for a major meltdown?

- Paranoia: 'I can't trust anyone'
- ▲ Misanthropy: 'there's no point'
- The blues: 'something is wrong with me'

4 What do you yearn for?

- I want to be loved
- I don't just want to be loved; I want people to like me the best
- ▲ I don't care about being loved; I just want to be respected

5 On holiday, you are relaxing on a quiet beach when a noisy family settles down next to you. You think:

- I'll have to decamp somewhere a bit further down the shore
- Unbelievable! I'll ask them if they want to lie down on my towel too

- ▲ I'll freak them out by giving them dirty looks and muttering

6 What makes you really angry?

- ▲ Dishonesty: those who think everyone else is gullible
- Selfishness: those who do not give sincere attention to others
- Arrogance: people who think they're so much better than me

7 If you have exchanged harsh words with someone, you:

- Feel guilty and embarrassed for the person who suffered your outburst
- Fear that this is irreversible and the relationship will never recover
- ▲ Are angry with yourself for allowing your feelings to get the better of you

8 You're walking along the street when you witness someone steal an old lady's handbag. Afterwards, you think:

- Why didn't I do anything to help?
- Why did no-one around me do anything to help?
- ▲ Why are human beings so wicked?

9 Recently, what has triggered your anger at work?

- Your own shortcomings; you've failed to find a solution to a business problem
- Being overlooked; your boss cut you short in a meeting

- ▲ Injustice; you witnessed a colleague who is less competent get promoted over you

10 A friend persistently fails to return your calls and emails. You:

- Wonder what you did to offend her
- Feel annoyed; this person clearly has no manners
- ▲ Are disappointed and wonder if any of your friends will be there for you when you need them

11 You meet someone at a party who suggests you meet up again. A week later, they still haven't called. You:

- Badmouth them to all your friends; clearly, they are just playing games
- Knew that new haircut didn't suit you
- ▲ Sink into a depression – there's no hope of you ever meeting The One

12 You get a second interview for your dream job, but you don't get it. You think:

- You don't do well at interviews, so it was doomed from the start
- These companies really have a nerve wasting people's time like that
- ▲ You'll never get a better job with the economy in the state it is

NOW SEE HOW MANY TIMES YOU PICKED EACH SYMBOL, AND TURN THE PAGE TO FIND YOUR PROFILE

Anger



>>>

MOSTLY ●

YOU ARE YOUR OWN WORST ENEMY

When you screw up, or think that you have, when someone gives you a hard time or when you feel they're doing so, that's when you're most likely to become overwhelmed with emotion, fly off the handle and lose all sense of perspective. When this happens, you're mostly just annoyed with yourself.

You are capable of treating other people with sweetness and understanding. But when it comes to how you treat yourself, you can be harsh and cruel, as if you think you deserve to be punished if you make the tiniest mistake.

You set very high standards for yourself – what's behind this is fear: fear of disappointment, fear of not being valued, fear of being judged by others. It's not only from a desire to do your best that you put yourself under such pressure; you're also driven by the fear of making a mistake. You feel like you need to watch your back at all times.

Your problem is perfectionism. Trying to bridge the gap between being good and perfect requires enormous effort on your part and is very stressful. For you, the formula for being triggered is a simple one: stress plus failure equals meltdown. But getting angry is a waste of energy and when it takes over, it often opens the door for worry, sadness, dejection and guilt, too.

What you can do By all means maintain your desire to do well, but reframe this as an ideal, not a rigid requirement for life. Accept your imperfections with a smile, even if your smile is forced! The best way to make changes in the long-term is in a mood of kindness, rather than when you're beating yourself up.

MOSTLY ■

OTHER PEOPLE TRIGGER YOUR ANGER

When someone doesn't acknowledge you or show you the respect that you crave, you are quick to view such behaviour as a lack of consideration. Even seemingly minor situations make you see red. It's not that you expect everyone you meet to value you or admire you (though you'd appreciate it), it's more that you believe we all owe each other something; that there is an unwritten social contract we should all adhere to. But your expectations for how people should behave socially are unrealistically high.

Your main source of self-esteem is being admired and valued by other people. Your rages are triggered by perceived slights from people you come into contact with. It doesn't take much to make you feel disrespected. You are the type of person who gets embroiled in conflicts quickly. No-one is saying you should agree to being treated shabbily, but the incidents that upset you might not be deliberate – the people concerned might not even be thinking about you at all.

What you can do Work on clarifying the power and positive uses of anger, as well as learning to recognise those situations where anger is toxic and can freeze out a relationship with resentment or mutual distrust.

Nurture those social connections where you feel there is mutual respect. If you think someone has behaved unacceptably, first try to understand the other person's point of view. Is there a logical reason to explain their attitude? Get it into perspective and think about other ways to express your feelings – by expressing yourself calmly and rationally, for example.

MOSTLY ▲

YOU ARE ANGRY WITH THE WORLD

So many things trigger passionate, outraged and angry outbursts from you – violence towards weakness, injustice and stupidity... How much of your emotional outbursts are provoked by your rose-tinted view that the world could be so much better than it is?

The answer is a lot, but it's not only that. What makes you annoyed and frustrated is also the belief that it would only take tiny efforts on everyone's part to make life more beautiful, easier and ethical. You view anger as a tool to change the world. If nobody reacts, if we all just 'put up and shut up', then nothing will ever improve. Such emotional outbursts can be healthy, provided this energy is channelled into action to create change as opposed to merely shouting and thumping the table.

You are someone who is known for your rants, and you resort to them frequently but, ultimately, this doesn't do much to change the world. Anger might be a good early warning system but, over time, a calm demeanour is a much more powerful quality.

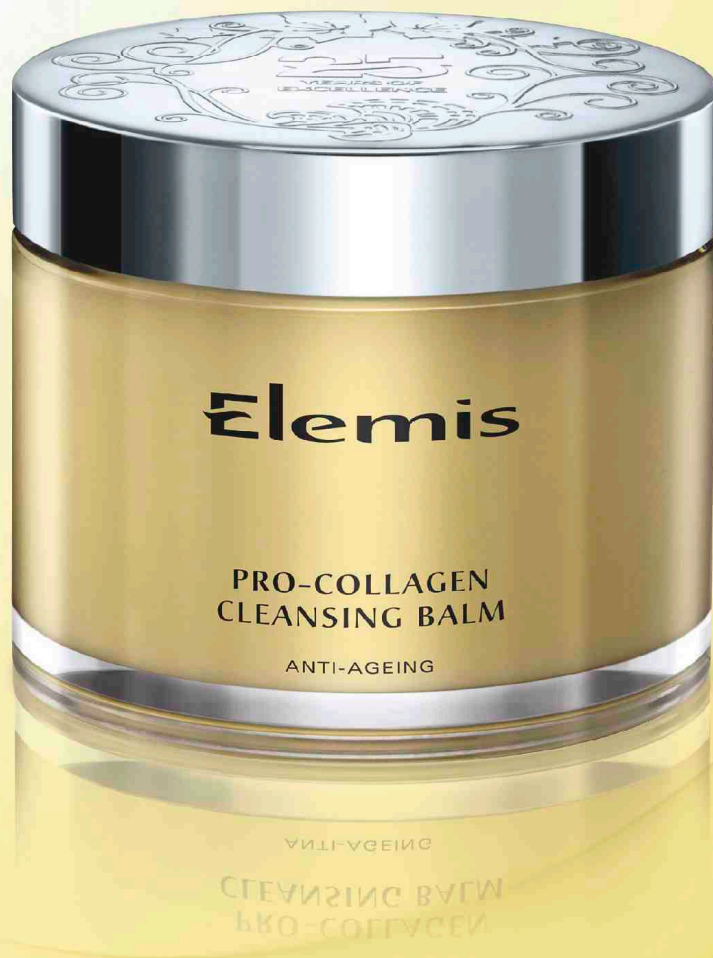
What you can do It takes all kinds to make a world! Try to accept that human behaviour is gloriously diverse. Look to nature for inspiration, where the animal predators and turbulent weather are all part of the natural order. Acceptance doesn't mean that you have to approve of everything, but learning to live in a less-than-perfect world will prepare you to act more effectively, without uploading excess emotion or posturing to get people's attention. In short, reinvest the energy of anger into motivation and commitment.

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HOWARD THURMAN



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1 **FACE OFF**
My face never hides how I'm feeling – but I like it that way, even if it can get me into trouble. Balance Me Restore And Replenish Face Cream, £40, blends botanical oils to firm, plump and smooth my complexion without impeding expression.



Illamasqua Spirit Palette, £34

2 **COLOUR THERAPY**
This palette is surprisingly wearable; I've worn the darkest hue for a moody, smoky look, the electric blue as a liner for an attention-grabbing, happy vibe and the lighter shades as a wash over the whole lid for a fun, whimsical finish – the possibilities are endless.



3 **BRAND NEW**
Hibiscus and apricot extracts brighten, while the AHA complex gently exfoliates for skin that emerges renewed.
RMK Skintuner Smoother, £32

Show your true colours



Amerley Ollennu shares the latest expressive beauty buys

Sometimes it's what you don't say that has more of an effect on your relationships than what you do. Do you find it hard to tap into how you're really feeling, let alone communicate it? Or do you worry that if you don't censor yourself you'll be misunderstood and ruffle feathers? I do. But, according to psychologists, suppressing your true self can have far-reaching negative effects. Make-up, fragrance and even the types of skincare you use can help you tap into how you're feeling. When I need comfort, I reach for bolstering balms; when I'm lacking confidence, I look to a good blow-dry to help; when I mean business, a dark plum lipplie is my go-to shade. For me, cosmetics are the one form of non-verbal communication that truly says it all.

4 **BLUE MOOD**
I believe that our nail shade says something about us. For me nothing says happy, carefree and optimistic like a bright turquoise hue.
Liz Earle Strengthening Nail Colour in Signature Blue, £8.50



5 **ATTENTION SEEKER**
Self-confidence comes by way of acceptance and self-love. I treat my body kindly with a twice-daily slathering of L'Occitane Almond Velvet Serum, £38 – it delves deep to reverse damage, plump and firm.

6 **SHEER DELIGHT**
This delivers a sheer veil of light-reflecting pigment fortified with an anti-pollution complex to protect skin from the elements. I've been wearing it post-holiday to enhance my natural tan and the 'happy glow' I've been carrying around after a week of doing exactly what I like.



Clarins Instant Light Radiance Boosting Complexion Base, £26.50

WAIT A MINUTE

Is fast-track beauty the best option or is a little more self-care worth our time? Perdita Nouril makes a case for slow beauty

Supposing you could have any superpower, what would it be? My immediate response has always been: the ability to control time. A recent poll by Neom Organics found that 58 per cent of women wish they could gain more hours in a day. On my daily commute each morning I see women grappling with their make-up bags, only to become visibly agitated when it all goes awry. I too am a commuter in this beauty rush hour and, while I take no umbrage with those who apply make-up in public, I'm aware that I've completely lost out on the self-care rituals that once accompanied my morning routine. The act of massaging cleanser into my face, spritzing with floral water, and kneading serum or cream into skin, is not just a physical wake-up call, but a powerful and positive start to the day, too. It grounds me – here I am, in this skin, ready to face the day.

While a surplus of innovative multitasking, fast-acting products have helped us strip our regime down (Unite's 7 Seconds Refresher Dry Shampoo is my morning godsend), has it also forced us to cut important corners in self-care? And how does that affect wellbeing? Beauty psychologist Dr Vivian Diller explains that 'technology has allowed us to accomplish more and do things

quicker, yet we also demand more of ourselves. We're attached to our phones and computers non-stop, constantly connecting, socially and professionally, and subsequently squeezing beauty rituals only into times in between.'

As we make less time for leisure in our lives, our beauty rituals fall further down our agenda, and 'even spa weekends, specifically designed for people to get away from it all, are viewed as a guilty

“Many ancient beauty customs stand the test of time because they serve as a powerful vehicle for making us feel wonderful”

pleasure, as we believe it's time that could be more productively spent,' continues Diller.

The Neom study also found that, while 100 per cent of the surveyed women believe their health and wellbeing to be a priority, nine out of 10 of them also classify themselves as 'stressed'. Yes, we know that we need to take time for ourselves in order to feel well, but we

are taking less of it than ever before. A beauty time-out is anything but frivolous. Many ancient beauty customs stand the test of time because they serve as a powerful vehicle for making us feel wonderful. A great skincare regime is so much more than looking after skin – that half hour in the bathroom is a precious slice of time in which you can focus on yourself and switch off. Ingredients such as lavender, neroli and ginger are repeatedly used in bodycare formulas because they create a sensory journey that not only improves your skin condition, but also leaves you *feeling* better.

Witness the extreme lengths taken to wear make-up in prison – M&Ms are used as lip stains, coffee granules mixed with moisturiser for self-tan and foundation, and bright inks from newspapers are even used as makeshift blusher. Make-up does more than flatter; it can humanise and normalise, too. I always remember my aunt applying her lipstick after having lost her husband. 'I'm OK now,' she said. She wasn't, of course, but the ritual served as a coping mechanism, bringing order and some small respite. In a world of short-cuts and time-savers, our personal beauty acts can feel sacred. Let's take the time to savour that.

For more tips on products that work well in a short time, see psychologies.co.uk/body/waitaminute

ILLUSTRATION: JESSICA DURRANT/GETTY IMAGES.
FOR STOCKISTS, SEE PAGE 140



TIME WELL SPENT

Ignoring the clock isn't always possible. Here's what to do with the precious little time you have

■ **ONE-MINUTE MAKE-UP.** For a low-maintenance routine, look for products that can be used across lips, eyelids and cheeks. NARS Multiple, £29, and Ilia Multi Sticks, £30, create a harmonious, polished look in less time with their flattering and wide colour palettes.

■ **5-MINUTE CLEANSE.** An invigorating facial massage softens tense muscles. I love Pai Camellia & Rose Gentle Hydrating Cleanser, £38, which gently awakens skin. Remove with a warm muslin cloth and breathe in its relaxing aroma for a spa-inspired treatment.

■ **30-MINUTE WIND DOWN.** Bathe with Cowshed Udderly Gorgeous Bath Salts, £24, blended with sea buckthorn oil, to improve circulation. Follow with Decléor Aroma Nutrition Nourishing Dry Oil, £32 – infused with rose and frankincense essential oils to soothe the skin and mind in a way that a lotion can't. Complete this calming bedtime ritual with Tranquillity room spray & pillow mist, £18.

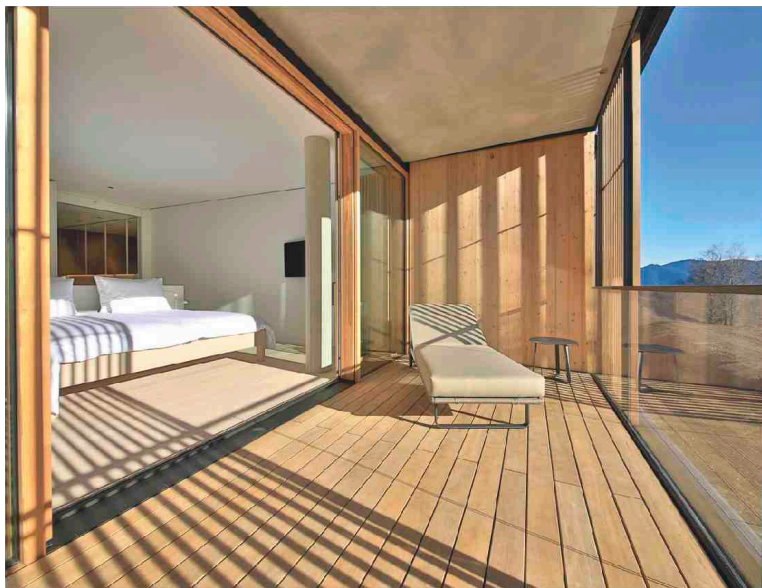
■ **THE OVERNIGHT FACIAL.** The REN Wake Wonderful Night-Time Facial Mask, £32, is akin to a therapist treating your skin while you sleep. Fruit acids and sodium lactate gradually raise skin PH levels, leaving it invigorated and fresh when you wake up.



The HEALING SPA SPECIAL 2015

Modern life can often take us to points of (almost) no return... and it's important to respond, and do something to strengthen, heal and rejuvenate ourselves again. This year, we have sent desperately-seeking-spa writers all over the world, in search of not just rest but recuperation, new directions, life lessons and hearty doses of self-love >>>





LANSERHOF, GERMANY

'I need to de-stress my digestive system'

Bey Ali, fashion buyer

FIRST THOUGHT: WOW. An hour's drive from Munich airport, on the shores of Lake Tegernsee, sits the new home of digestive health, informed by the Mayr protocol. Having been blown away by the Mayr FX in Austria, I'm intrigued to see if this swanky spot can match the original's care, unsullied peace and body-transforming results.

I'm examined by Dr Benedetto-Reisch, who takes my blood pressure, does an abdominal massage, and asks lots of questions. A tongue examination tells her I like my sugar a bit too much. Busted. She can see I've got some digestive and bowel problems, and gives me a bespoke programme for the next eight days, which includes glucose- and fructose-testing for intolerance, vitamin infusion injections, bespoke detoxifying massage, time with a personal trainer, a nutritionist and, groan, a colonic too.

The next few days fly by, with dedicated sessions and appointments, all tailored to get my sluggish system going again. I've let things slip and it feels incredible to be in the care of others now, as they diagnose, cleanse and then put my system back together again. With each test and treatment, my body's complex mechanics begin to make more sense to me, and I vow never to let the feeling I leave with – lightness, vitality, clean energy – slip away again.

Seven nights at Lanserhof Tegernsee costs from £2,824 per person, including all treatments, tests and training. Fly with Lufthansa (lufthansa.com).

Tip

Take your most comfortable and chic pyjamas, as you'll want to pad around in them, and your robe, for much of the time.

Tip

For a group of 10 or more, book the incredible alfresco lunch at Quinto de Panascal (fonseca.pt/en/visitors-centre)

THE YEATMAN, PORTUGAL

'I'd like to take time out to treat myself'

Eminé Ali Rushton, *Psychologies'* beauty and wellbeing director

MY DAY-TO-DAY MENU is healthy, but I'd forgotten how much I enjoy a bit of culinary therapy – exquisite food, incredible wine and great conversation. The Yeatman is a rare breed (or fine vintage) in the spa world. It is owned by one of Porto's most distinguished wine-producer families, and the wine and port offering is unrivalled.

There's something confidential about The Yeatman too, despite its popularity, one feels as though a private dalliance would play out perfectly within the vivacious glow of Dick's Bar (open 24 hours, of course, because there's no knowing when one might need a Martini). Then there's the Michelin-starred restaurant (bone marrow was a highlight), and the Caudalie Vinotherapie Spa, which uses everything from grape pulp to the seeds, for its effective therapies. After two days of decadent dinners and port-tastings (I'll remain ever partial to the Fonseca 20 Year Tawny), spa time was just the ticket. My Cabernet Scrub left skin glowing, and relaxation time, enhanced with Vichy experience showers, that use music, light and aromatherapy, was just that. The four-night Yeatman Hotel 'Douro Experience' runs until 31 October and includes guided tours of the Douro Valley, boat trip, vineyard experience and a trip to Taylor's wine cellar. Prices start from £232 in June for two people (the-yeatman-hotel.com). TAP flies from London Gatwick to Porto (flytap.com).





ANASSA HOTEL, CYPRUS

‘Help me stabilise my temperamental skin’

Amerley Ollennu, *Psychologies*’ beauty and wellbeing editor

MY SKIN IS NOTHING if not temperamental, a slave to hormones; acne flares up each month without fail, while seasonal changes bring about severe reactions, too. Stress also plays a huge role in my skin’s condition and, when I arrived at luxury five-star resort Anassa after a particularly stressful time, I was in need of help.

Tumbling down a secluded hillside towards the infinite blue of the eastern Mediterranean, the resort’s low-rise buildings and gardens are arranged around an idyllic village square complete with Byzantine chapel. Set in an area of outstanding natural beauty, you’d be hard-pressed not to feel your shoulders relax and your mind ease on arrival. But it was at the spa that I found my salvation. Reflecting the restorative powers of the island, it focuses heavily on healing and has joined forces with the Anassa (‘queen’ in Greek) of holistic and restorative beauty herself, Denise Leicester, founder of beauty brand ILA. The

brand’s vocation is to bring purity, energy and balance into everyday life through the creation of luxury organic products that are as effective as they are ethical. With this in mind, I chose the Anassa bespoke ILA facial, in the hope that I’d emerge transformed and healed. Although it’s customised in accordance with each individual’s needs, the facial aims to deeply cleanse and purify the skin, focusing on lymphatic drainage to improve the circulation, vitality and tone of the complexion. Afterwards, my skin glowed, and I slept better for days, too. Now I focus more on how I apply my products and am working on my stress levels with breathing and meditation. My skin has never looked better.

Classic Collection Holidays offers seven nights at Anassa, Cyprus from £1,699 per person, based on two adults sharing a garden-view room on a B&B basis, and includes return flights from London Gatwick (other UK departure airports available) and private transfers (classic-collection.co.uk).

Tip

Pack a favourite book – the scenery begs to be enjoyed with a glass of wine and a great novel.

>>>



THE SUN SIYAM IRU FUSHI RESORT, MALDIVES

'Work has taken over. My boyfriend and I need our lives back'

Ali Roff, *Psychologies'* Dossier and The Fix editor

FROM THE MOMENT I stepped off the seaplane onto the jetty walkway of the Maldivian island of Iru Fushi, my concern for the rest of the world, and footwear for that matter, drifted off into the Indian Ocean. It's difficult to find the headspace to be troubled by the usual dramas when every sense is inundated with novel, new experiences. I was looking to immerse myself in island life; to regenerate and clear my mind, if just for a while.


The island is a hub of nature and tranquillity, neatly designed. Palm trees create dappled shade as you criss-cross Iru Fushi's 52 acres; it's big enough to feel as if you have it to yourself, yet you could walk the perimeter in 20 minutes. The morning walk from my beach villa to the Thalgo spa at The Sun Siyam Iru Fushi, an open-air oasis in the centre of the island, is a memory I look back on fondly. A peaceful stroll – birds singing, beaming Maldivian smiles (get to know the locals, their genuine happiness is contagious) – led me to the water garden, where I relaxed in the aroma of sandalwood and jasmine and sipped ginger tea. The

spa combines the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda and Chinese medicine with contemporary Western practices. Ayurvedic and Chinese doctors are on-hand for bespoke consultations before treatment. I tried the Abhyanga deep massage – to aid sleep and release built-up stress – which the masseuse delivers using her whole body weight. Led back through the water garden feeling renewed, another ginger tea was served in the shaded relaxation area – a perfect spot to reset your perspective. Free from worries about the tedious details of life, my mind was now clear and, open to new ideas, conversations and experiences, my creativity flourished. They say each tiny island in the Maldives – there are over 1,000 – has its own unique atmosphere. This was my first trip to any of them, and even if what they say is true, I don't think I'd be tempted to venture from Iru Fushi: perfection is difficult to replicate.

Seven nights at The Sun Siyam Iru Fushi, staying on a B&B basis, costs from £1,199 per person including flights with Oman Air (travelbag.co.uk).

Tip

Try the traditional Maldivian-inspired ritual *Bondithaan Kurun*, a relaxing Dhivehi medical practice for relieving stress, prepared with herbs collected from the island that morning.



OCÉANO, TENERIFE, SPAIN

‘Having been diagnosed with cancer, I need time to gather my strength’

Alice Flood, media sales executive

‘OCEAN. CONSCIOUSNESS. EXPERIENCE,’ is the tagline, and it rings true through every part of your time at this health hotel (a member of Healing Hotels of the World). The team requested my medical history and notes from my oncologist, so they could best prepare for my stay. I joined the healthy Thalasso Balance programme – strict but tasty – and all dishes were derived from the sea.

I arrived in the late evening, and sat down to king prawns fried in garlic and olive oil, accompanied by a glass of delicious local wine. After dinner, I checked in. The room was spacious and the balcony with its ocean view felt like therapy in itself. I fell asleep to the soothing sound of the waves – a good start. Breakfast the next day was bright, healthy, fresh and seasonal. I meet with Dr Rolle who runs the medical spa. He suggested a Vital health analysis by wearing a heart monitor for 24 hours to measure heart rate for each activity (walking, exercise, eating, sleeping). A healthy lunch and bracing walk along the sea front was followed by the first treatment at the Wellness Spa – a Thalasso Algae wrap which was a bit like being poached, but

my skin felt good afterwards. The next treatment was a deeply relaxing massage by Alejandra, which was expertly rhythmic. That afternoon I joined the water gymnastics in the Thalasso indoor pool, followed by a sauna. Later, I returned to the pool – soothing vibrations of meditation music flowed through the water via underwater speakers, and I had this sense that my body was absorbing the calm, and working to heal itself, too.

The rest of my stay was a wonderful balance of fitness (personal training sessions with Janice involved outdoor work, and also use of the rebounder), Thalasso treatments (including a potent healing soak) and fantastic massages. On my last day, I had the Rugen healing chalk wrap, which left my skin feeling impossibly silky, and is also great at drawing out impurities.

Leaving this lovely place, my thoughts focused on continuing my healing journey, and carrying this feeling of inner peace with me back to England. On the whole, so far, it’s working.

Wellbeing Escapes offers a 7-night package from £537 per person (wellbeingescapes.com).

Tip

The staff at Océano tend to speak just Spanish or German, so it’s worth taking a phrasebook with you and brushing up on some key phrases.



VILLA EDEN, MERANO, ITALY

'I need to overcome my chronic fatigue'

Selda Enver Goodwin, yoga teacher

FATIGUED, INFLAMED AND sleep-deprived, I'm eager to see if Villa Eden, deemed northern Italy's 'leading health resort', can provide the cure. Nestled amid striking Alpine scenery, the magical city of Merano quickly captures my soul (*anima* in Italian). Angelika has been running the show here since 2003, offering a blend of medical and beauty treatments. I check in for a five-day, metabolic therapy programme that promises to recharge energy levels, promote vitality and heal me from the root.

Dr De Nobili and his staff guide me through an initial diagnostic evaluation. My programme consists of three 'ozone therapy and homotoxicological mesotherapy' sessions – to replenish waste-filled blood with oxygen, enhancing circulation and energy – and five 'biothermic' therapies that will restore and correct metabolism.

Two days in, still brain-fogged and mentally drained, I'm yet to unpack or take a swim, but somehow manage to stumble into town for

gelato. The air, clean and fresh as ice, excites my cells! Therapist Francesca treats me to reflexology, and identifies a liver depletion problem. Later, I find myself in a body cast treatment that sees my bottom half encased like an ancient Pharaoh. The effects are immediate; my legs feel lighter, soft and taut. Once I've been cleansed, masked, cast and peeled, Silvia's facial lifts my jawline and spirits in equal measure. A brisk 7am walk invigorates my muscles, so afternoon yoga is the perfect antidote. Later, I listen to the other guests, chattering in sing-song Italian, as I enjoy my buckwheat gnocchi, soup and salad lunch.

There's something in the air here – perhaps the miracle spring water plays a part, too – but after only a few nights away from the craziness of London life, I'm sleeping longer, feeling stronger and smiling my way through Verona airport.

Wellbeing Escapes offers an all-inclusive seven-night Metabolic & Energy Booster Programme at Villa Eden from £2,054 per person (wellbeingescapes.com).

Tip

Ensure you pack comfortable shoes to explore the beauty and ambience of the town, and enjoy some café culture (gelato obligatory).

SRI PANWA, PHUKET, THAILAND

'I need alternative therapies to aid my arthritis'

Amerley Ollennu, *Psychologies* beauty and wellbeing editor

AFTER MY FOOT was run over by a car a few years ago, I developed arthritis in those joints. Yoga had been recommended to me as a way to keep fit without putting too much pressure on my arthritic foot. So, after much resistance – I prefer more energetic activities – but lured by the beautiful resort of Sri Panwa, on the southeast coast of Phuket, I succumbed.

Sri Panwa sits on a 32-acre plot on a steep hill that overlooks the mesmerising blue seas of Cape Panwa. Villas are dotted around the property, appearing from the tropical undergrowth as if they had shot up in pretty much the same way as the natural foliage. Situated right on the harbour, it's so high up above it all that you feel as though you have been transported to a secluded island – this is escape at its finest.

When I did venture out, it was for my daily Hatha yoga classes. A popular type of yoga, Hatha is one of the most holistic forms of the discipline. Made up of postures, purification procedures, gestures, meditation and focused breathing, it not only aids cognitive function – boosting your focus and memory – it can also increase flexibility and help reduce anxiety.

The one-on-one classes meant that I got specialised attention which was just what I needed – if I couldn't do a particular move because of my arthritic foot, then my instructor offered an alternative. And because I'm flexible but don't yet have the strength or form of a more experienced yogi, he was able to create a class that mixed some beginner moves with other positions that were a little more advanced.

After class I'd head to the spa, always arriving a little early to relax for a while on the sun deck and take in the beautiful views. The tranquillity



of the calm blue sea below and the uninhabited islands in the distance gave me the space to re-evaluate my life, put things in perspective and make some important decisions about my future – that's the increased cognitive function post-yoga doing its thing.

A visit to Sri Panwa starts from £425 per night based on two people sharing a Pool Suite on a bed & breakfast basis, including access to all areas of the resort and complimentary mini bar. Yoga classes cost from £67 per hour for up to four people sharing a class (sripanwa.com).

Tip

Ensure you book in for a full Thai massage... well, when in Thailand!



38° NORTH, SANTA EULARIA, IBIZA

‘Inspire me to get fit’ Caroline Brien, freelance beauty journalist

The DNAFit programme at 38° North is gold standard. What sets it apart is a pre-trip DNA test done via a cheek swab. The results highlight genetic markers that reveal, for example, how your body reacts to carbs and saturated fat. Combined with fitness tests after arrival, it's a savvy way for husband and wife specialists Kelly Morgan and James Davis to work out an effective plan for your stay at the stunning five-star Aguas de

Ibiza eco resort. Expect 5km morning runs along the coast, afternoon hikes in the mountains, classes as varied as boxing, paddle-boarding and yoga, plus personal training sessions with kick-boxing champion Faye Maloney. Respite comes in the shape of the spa pools and the delicious food. You'll return feeling like a new person.

DNAFit IBIZA costs from £1,968 per person, and runs from April to October (thirtyeightdegreesnorth.com).

Tip

Have dinner at La Paloma, in San Lorenzo, for the convivial mood and handmade-with-love veggie food (palomaibiza.com).

>>>

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OUR PICK OF UK SPAS

GRAYSHOTT SPA, SURREY

‘My digestive system needs rebalancing’

Suzy Greaves, *Psychologies*’ editor

LOCATED JUST AN hour from London, Grayshott Manor is like a country house hotel – with a difference. With a top class spa, gym and swimming pool and exquisitely healthy meals, you don’t head home feeling bloated as you do when indulging in the usual hotel break.

I started my day with 30 laps of the pool, followed by the Balance programme in the spa – an aromatherapy face and back

massage, plus reflexology. I also hiked after lunch in the beautiful countryside. I came home feeling lithe, energised and inspired by the poetry of former resident Lord Alfred Tennyson: ‘So many worlds, so much to do, so little done, such things to be.’

The Balance programme starts from £455 for two nights, including accommodation, all meals, soft drinks, face massage, reflexology treatment and aromatherapy massage (grayshottspa.com).

NEOM ORGANICS, LONDON

‘I need a break from the daily grind’

Eminé Ali Rushton, *Psychologies*’ beauty and wellbeing director

DRAWING UPON THE wealth of wisdom provided by Neom’s Wellbeing Board – a group of experts in their respective fields, including Pilates, mindfulness and sleep – Neom founder Nicola Elliott wanted to produce spa treatments that left the client feeling awed, surprised and truly ‘treated’. ‘Beyond the surface’ is the repeated message with Neom – the products smell and look incredible, yes, but it’s the fact that

Neom delivers over and above, that really makes them different. The trained Neom Therapists draw on a variety of disciplines, including shiatsu, craniosacral therapy and Thai massage, to deliver 60 or 90 minute treatments, across four targeted areas: Sleep, De-Stress, Energise and Happiness.

Treatments cost from £70 for 60 minutes at the store in Wimbledon Village (neomorganics.com).



THE LIFEHOUSE SPA & HOTEL, ESSEX

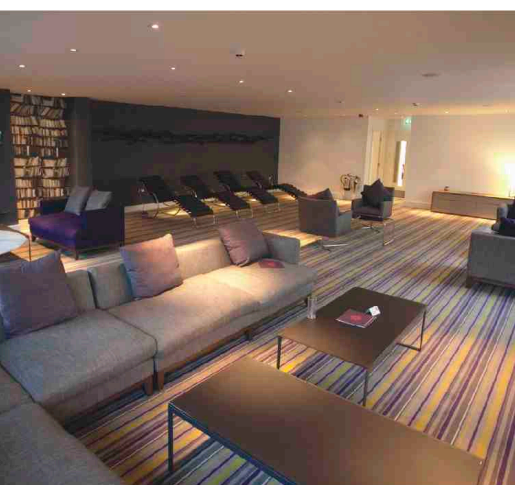
‘After a period of illness, I need an immune boost’

Selda Enver Goodwin, yoga teacher

THE RECOVERY BREAK at the Lifehouse supports and nurtures anyone recuperating from illness, bereavement or burnout. Spa therapists are trained by the NHS Christie Trust so are particularly attuned to those in post-cancer recovery. With the help of resident naturopath Sue Davis, guests can customise treatments to suit their mind and body. Healer Michael Barthaud’s list of offerings is as extensive

as his experience, so his meditation class, followed by muscle-based therapy, is a must, as is the gentle yoga. The meals are nourishing and a not-so-naughty hot chocolate nightcap (coconut milk, dark chocolate and cinnamon stick) can be delivered straight to your door. Delish!

A two-night Recovery Break at the Lifehouse Spa & Hotel costs from £361 per person, including accommodation, all meals, two smoothies and two treatments (lifehouse.co.uk). >>>





HOTEL BELLEVUE, CROATIA

‘I need to stop making excuses, and just take care of myself’

Amerley Ollennu, *Psychologies*' beauty and wellbeing editor

THAT WEIRD RASH on my arm, my constant lack of energy and the lump I can sometimes feel in my throat had gone unchecked for months. Work is always my excuse, so why not book in for a check-up when I'm on holiday? And with its reputation as an island with a healing climate, what better place to visit than Mali Lošinj?

Hotel Bellevue is a modern delight in the heart of a pine forest on the beautiful Lošinj bay. My days were spent relaxing by the pool, paddling in the sea, walking around the picturesque town, and eating lots of fresh fish, salads, vegetables and the most delicious olive oil.

The structure came in the form of medical check-ups, workouts and massage as part of the Santé programme, including both holistic and medical treatments for an integrative approach to health. I had a full body examination on day one. My scan showed some lumps around my thyroid gland – which is not unusual, but one was just over a centimetre in size, suggesting a biopsy

would be needed to ensure it was benign. This unnerved me, but got me thinking about how long it would have gone unchecked if it were left to me to see my doctor.

The Santé! programme's Diamond sound and colour therapy bed was a highlight – it combines colour therapy and sound frequency to help the body reduce stress, enhance its immune function, reduce muscle tension and increase endorphin levels. The rest of the programme is made up of a nutritional consultation and a personal training session.

A few months later, my biopsy has given me the all-clear and, unsurprisingly, I don't leave it so long to see the doctor now.

The Santé! health preservation programme costs £325. Prestige Holidays offers a week's stay from 8 September from £996 per person, including flights from Gatwick to Pula, transfers and accommodation at the Bellevue in a Superior Atrium room on a bed & breakfast basis (prestigeholidays.co.uk).

Tip

Buy some of the antioxidant-rich local olive oil to bring home – it's out of this world.

BARBERYN REEF AYURVEDA RESORT, BERUWALA, SRI LANKA

‘My soul is tired... help me rediscover my mojo’

Isabel O'Connor, PR company founder

ARRIVING IN SRI Lanka is slightly surreal, as if someone has hit the mute button. As I approached the Barbelyn Reef entrance, I knew I'd arrived at a sanctuary. No wi-fi or phones are allowed and a personalised treatment and meal schedule was ready for me – this was the real Ayurvedic deal in a family-run retreat overlooking the ocean. Ayurveda comes from Sanskrit, meaning ‘life knowledge’. This 5,000-year-old holistic healing system is more science than religion and the core belief is that if we make good lifestyle choices, we receive good emotional and physical health.

The room was modern and bright with local art and soft textiles, and allowed a sea breeze to flow through. Only the sound of the ocean, monkeys playing and birds singing could be heard, over subtle chanting in the distance during prayer. Barbelyn is half-medical centre, half-spa resort. Following an assessment to determine my *dosha* and body type by the resident Ayurvedic doctor, my daily schedule was arranged. Treatments

included *shirodhara* (where warm oil is poured onto the forehead), body work, steam inhalation, acupuncture, mango clay facials and herbal baths. All I had to do was show up on time – lateness is a no-no here – and I've never in my life felt so nurtured on every level.

On the spa side, the pool overlooks the reef where I witness incredible sunsets. Yoga sessions are offered twice a day at dusk and dawn with meditation and tai chi in the schedule, too. Exhausted, I slept lots, and felt a bit like I sleepwalked to my daily medical appointments – this was my body catching up, recharging. I was calm, in the moment, with the usual anxiety and adrenal highs and lows all gone. Soul rested and soothed, a lighter me – in both body and heart – was ready to head home and move forward.

Full-board accommodation at Barbelyn starts at £55 per person per night; the Ayurveda programme costs £50 per day (barberynresorts.com). Sri Lankan Airlines flies from the UK from £559 return (srilankan.com).

Tip

Take Ayurvedic reading with you, as you are certain to be bitten by the bug! I love *The Body Balance Plan* by Eminé Ali Rushton (Watkins, £7.99), *Psychologies'* own beauty & wellbeing director.



>>>



EREMITO HOTELITO DEL ALMA, UMBRIA, ITALY

'I feel in need of a serious digital detox'

Bella Binns, freelance editor and stylist

AS MARCELLO MURZILLI, Eremito's founder and host, drives us up the steep, potholed track to Eremito (which roughly translates as 'hermits' in Italian – a nod to the monastic tradition on which the luxury retreat is founded), I start to grasp the isolation of the place – and I couldn't be happier. With a hotel-wide tech ban, I've signed up for four days without wifi, text or TV. My laptop, usually squeezed into my hand baggage, is languishing at home. In its place are books that, I hope, will help me shrug off my 21st century shackles and relax. If I can concentrate long enough to read a whole page, that is...

For a chronic multi-tasker like me, Eremito is both wonderful and daunting. Candlelight, Gregorian chants and silent dinners of locally sourced vegetarian cuisine, are all designed to help the solo guests – rooms are for one here – unplug and quieten the constant mental chatter. The silence is deafening at first, and I feel awkward eating in near-darkness with five strangers, but, by the end, the experience has transformed into an almost meditative practice. My room, modelled on the traditional living quarters of

the region's Franciscan monks, is humble but tasteful, with a seat and desk carved into stone overlooking the wooded valley and winding river below. Antique, hand-stitched hemp sheets make for the kind of deep, restorative sleep I rarely experience at home living near Heathrow's main flight path. I also take advantage of the stunning location and venture into the hills and to a small waterfall where I pause for 10 minutes' mindful meditation. It sounds clichéd, but I can honestly feel the energy of the forest vibrating around me.

In a world where luxury commonly equates to more – more connectivity, more stimulation, more choice – Eremito lets you press pause. The luxuries on offer are the most important ones of all – time and solitude. I leave feeling an innate sense of calm and clarity, ready to return to 'real life' but with the resolve to keep a little of Eremito's divine peace inside me as I board the plane home.

Prices from £275 per person per room for an all-inclusive two-night, three-day stay, including transfers from Fabro-Ficulle train station, breakfast, lunch, dinner, use of spa facilities and organised walks (eremito.com; designhotels.com/eremito).

Tip

Seek further spiritual solace in the rustic stone Turkish bath and Jacuzzi – one concession to the otherwise monastic lifestyle.

SKYROS

Inspiration ♦ Creativity ♦ Joy



"The first and still the best"
alternative holiday

◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇
THE GUARDIAN





Do you know what Infrared-A is doing to your skin?

Protect yourself against up to 4x more of the sun's rays*

- Infrared-A makes up 30% of the sun's rays; UV accounts for just 7%
- Infrared-A penetrates deeper into our skin and may cause accelerated ageing, loss of firmness, wrinkling and long-term cell damage
- Ladival's Advanced Infrared-A Defence System protects against UV-A, UV-B **and** Infrared-A; that's 4x more of the sun's damaging rays*

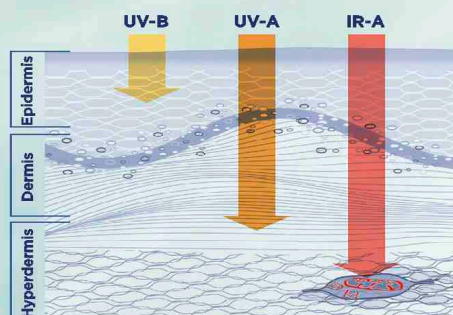


Diagram showing the sun's rays penetrating your skin.



Ladival. Sun protection in a new light.

Available in a variety of SPF levels, adults/kids and lotion/spray formats.

*Compared to UV-A/UV-B only sun creams.



CAMP OUT

I'm doing the 'family festival' thing at Wilderness, but pitching myself at The Sanctuary, where adult respite includes Pukka tea, yoga, Neal's Yard treatments and even table service at The Dandy Lion (wildwellbeing.co.uk).

BRIGHT EYES

I've never liked blackout blinds, preferring to be woken by natural light, but 5am beams are not always convenient. The cotton velvet underside of Holistic Silk's teddy bear-soft mask also means it doesn't slip off while you sleep (as silk is wont to do), while the lavender filling scents the air and really does help soothe as you slumber.



It's time to... find focus



Late spring, when the light is vivid and clean, and the days stretch on past 7pm, brings with it a real sense of purpose. Hibernation mode has gone; I now want to wake up, get out, go and do. We're programmed to feel revitalised by this season's vital brightness... the world is blooming, and fresh, energy-filled food is back on the plate – bye-bye root veg; hello shoots, leaves, greens and berries.

I'm ploughing this new direction into the things I've wanted to do but haven't had a chance to, yet – planning for the Wilderness Festival; an activity holiday with the family; a deep spring-clean of the house and wardrobe; and planting a tiny, but pretty wildflower patch for cuttings in the front garden. Things start to sparkle and show their promise and, once again, it's time to come out of our shells, smile and brave the new world.

Emine

Beauty and wellbeing director

LIVING FOOD

Come spring, our bodies certainly benefit from fresh and enzyme-rich meals. Two newcomers to the raw foodie scene have reignited my taste buds. **Rooted London** (which also runs fantastic supper clubs), makes a mean cacao and cardamom 'mylk' and wonderful, nutty, gluten-free granola, while **Living Food Kitchen's seasonal pudding pots**, from £2.59, and zingy hummus have brightened up my lunches no end.



FLOWER FACE

We've long been fans of Dr Jackson's smart botanical products (100 per cent natural, ethical and effective) and the new Face Wash 07, £25, is a skin-kind treat with camomile, kigelia and pomegranate fruit acids, that leaves skin comfortably hydrated, cleansed and toned.

GOOD THOUGHTS



“I’ve got lots of ambitions, but I only ever think of them when I’m lying around in my undies having a snooze”

ELIZABETH JANE HOWARD, *MR. WRONG*

GET BACK YOUR BEDTIME HOUR WITH US: [LIFELABS.PSYCHOLOGIES.CO.UK/CHANNELS/204-GET-BACK-YOUR-BEDTIME](https://lifelabs.psychologies.co.uk/channels/204-get-back-your-bedtime)

THE HYPE

The number of juice bars continues to rise, and so have the health concerns over their benefits, with the *British Medical Journal* highlighting that some juices have the same sugar content as fizzy drinks and are of low dietary value, as they don't contain the nutritious pulp.

While debates rage over the risks of the -oses (fructose, sucrose and glucose), a new wellbeing whizz has entered from stage left – health shots. These powerhouses quickly flood the body with vitamins, minerals and nutrients, as they are highly concentrated. 'Shots are faster-acting, as they tend to be a single plant type such as wheat- or barleygrass, and are easily absorbed because they're not bound up with other ingredients that can slow absorption,' explains Liz Earle, author of *Juice* (Kyle Books, £14.99). But do all the best things really come in small packages? Or are these dense drinks more of a long shot?



Juicing shots

Every issue, we bring you the definitive facts around the latest health trends. This month, we take a look at nutritional juices

THE FACTS

- Vegetable or plant-based shots can be healthier than fruit-based juices, as they contain less sugar. 'The health benefits will depend on what's in the shot or juice, but if you're comparing like-for-like (a veg juice or a veg shot, for example), then they are equally beneficial,' says Kara Rosen, founder of juice company Plenish.
- *Scientific American* reported that anecdotal evidence on wheatgrass has undermined scientific results. In the 1940s, holistic health practitioner Ann Wigmore noted that dogs and cats eat grass when ill. Believing its enzymes and

chlorophyll constituted its healing powers, she blended fresh wheatgrass into juice. Yet, Prof William T. Jarvis, founder of the National Council Against Health Fraud, argued it's nonsense as, 'orally ingested enzymes are digested in the stomach and chlorophyll can't detoxify the body as it's not absorbed.'

- Juicemaster.com founder Jason Vale says we shouldn't underestimate the nutritional power of a single ingredient-based shot. 'A garlic shot is perhaps the finest natural antibiotic. It's antiviral and anti-fungal and unlike synthetic antibiotics, it won't kill off healthy bacteria.'

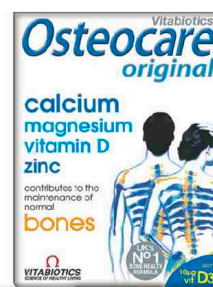
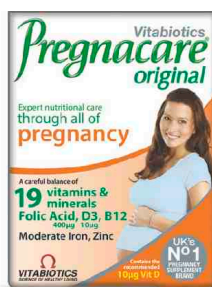
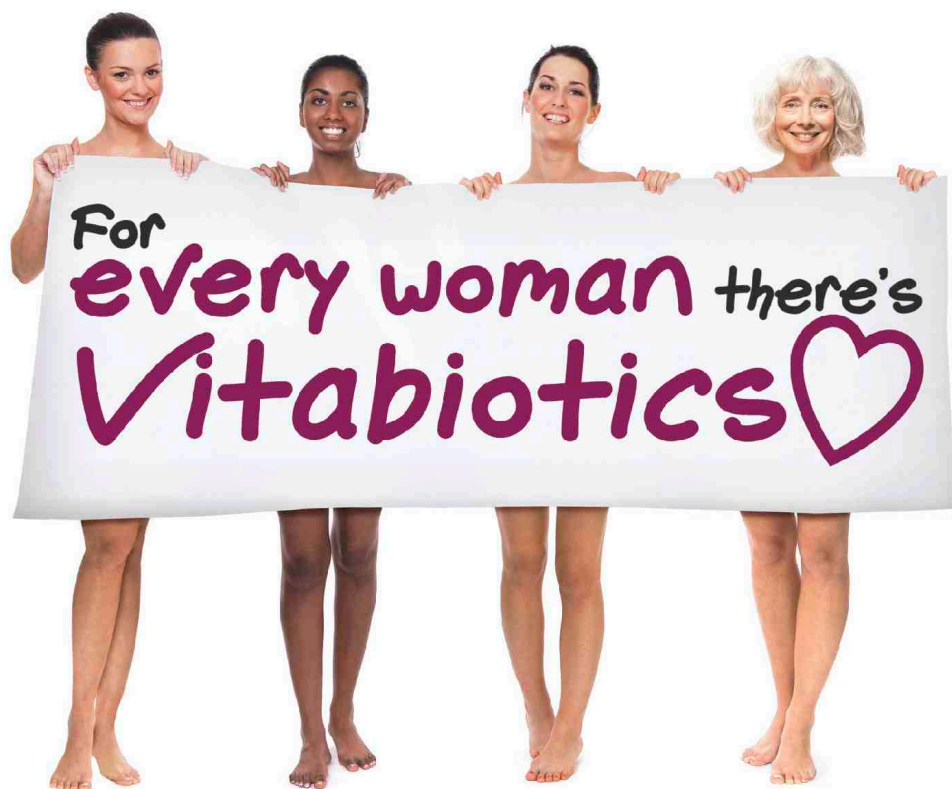
THE VERDICT

The correct juicing equipment is vital to fully reap the benefits of shots and juices. Many shop-bought juices are heat-treated and pasteurised to ensure a longer shelf life and, as a result, most nutrients are lost. But many juicers and blenders fully masticate the entire contents, allowing you to consume the rich pulp that hasn't been denatured.

Ultimately, shots (or juices) shouldn't be used as a substitute for a healthy diet filled with lots of fresh produce. But if you have a hectic timetable and are not getting enough fresh

produce into your diet, they can help increase your vitamin and mineral intake. However, you should also watch your quantities. Several shots taken in a single day can add up to around 1kg of fresh veg, which can actually tax the body and digestive system, and many people suffer stomach upset (including gas, diarrhoea and cramps as a result). Our motto at *Psychologies* is: everything in moderation. Lay the pieces of veg out on a table. If you can't comfortably eat them in a day, you shouldn't be drinking them down in juice-form either.

NEXT MONTH: DESK EXERCISE – WE INVESTIGATE HOW EFFECTIVE IT REALLY IS



The UK's leading supplements for women's health

Whether you are looking for support during a time of change like pregnancy or menopause, or simply an ideal general multi-vitamin, the **award winning Vitabiotics women's range** offers comprehensive nutritional support from **sensible, balanced formulae**. With over 40 years' experience, there's no women's supplement range more relied on than Vitabiotics.

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*Nielsen GB ScanTrack
Total Coverage 52 w/e 31 Jan 2015



Fuel up

Each month, Amerley Ollennu tests the latest fitness trends, delving into the psychology of exercise to give you the tools to get and stay fit

After a year of no dieting, I'm finally at a place where I eat well and don't count calories. Now I have a new challenge – what do I eat to best fuel my body for training and how do I keep a healthy perspective on all things food?

EAT RIGHT

Jonathan Lomax, founder of Lomax Chelsea – a bespoke fitness, nutrition and wellbeing destination (Lomaxpt.com) – believes 'to get fitter you need to fuel your body correctly (by eating the right balance of macro nutrients – carbs, protein and fats) but you also need to eat at the right times to sustain energy levels, boost them pre-workout and aid muscle repair after.'

This is where I begin to wonder, do I need extra protein from supplements or can I get it from food? Do I reduce my carb intake to get the most out of my sessions? 'No food group should be eliminated from your diet, but carbs don't have to come from stereotypical sources – white pasta

or rice, and potatoes. They can be found in vegetables, nuts and seeds, as well as legumes – all of which don't cause huge energy spikes and contain far more fibre,' says Lomax. 'Protein is a key component of sports nutrition as the amino acids are the muscles' building blocks, aiding growth and repair. However, unless you're working out more than three times per week, where two or more are high intensity training or weight-based

“To get fitter, you need to fuel your body correctly”

sessions, you won't require extra protein. But if you do, protein powders allow you to have more protein without increasing fats and carbs.'

When it comes to portion size, calories are key, he adds. Find out how many calories you burn in a day without exercise (visit psychologies.co.uk/calculate-your-bmr), then in a day with exercise. Now you can work out how many you should be eating in order to maintain your physique or lose excess fat (if you feel you need to). 'Then it's a case of ensuring you eat six meals a day that add up to the total calories



you require, and that your meals contain 50 per cent protein with carbs and vegetables split equally,' says Lomax.

ONE MONTH ON...

Because I'm keen to keep my newly found healthy perspective, I only spent two weeks weighing portions and counting calories. Now I know how much to have just by looking and I'm not obsessing about whether I eat more when I'm really hungry. Eating every two to three hours keeps my energy levels balanced and makes getting to the gym after a full day of work feel a lot less like the punishment that it used to.

Next month: Amerley asks the experts how to stay motivated. Follow Amerley on Instagram @amerleyo

PROTEIN POWER

Lack of protein can lead to slow metabolic function, systematic exhaustion, cravings and poor hair, skin and nails. Redress the balance with these finds...

POWDER:
The Super Elixir Nourishing Protein, £45



SNACK POT:
Pret Egg and Spinach Protein Pot, £1.50



Eggs are packed with protein, as well as 18 vitamins and minerals



BALANCED BREAKFAST:
Quinoa Beetroot and Pistachio, £7.95

Hay fever, sinusitis, blocked or runny nose? **BREATHE!**

Bad news for hay fever sufferers... spring is here!

As we look forward to the longer, warmer days, it is tinged with misery for hay fever sufferers who dread the thought of a blocked nose, constant sneezing and red itchy eyes which can really impact on their enjoyment of the spring/summer months.

Hypertonic sea water, essential oils and vegetable extracts can be precious allies to help clear the nose naturally



THE PURESENTIEL HYPERTONIC NASAL SPRAY: THE 100% NATURAL SOLUTION*

> This spray decongests the nose, while reducing hay fever symptoms and moistening and cleaning nasal membranes.

Its formula is 100% natural in origin, mixing **hypertonic sea water, echinacea, propolis, rosemary floral water** and **4 essential oils** (*ravintsara, geranium, eucalyptus radiata, niaouli*) which work in combination, offering a gentle, non-irritant and non-drying solution to the symptoms of hay fever.

> **Very well tolerated, the efficacy of the Puressentiel Hypertonic Nasal Spray has been demonstrated from the very first minutes, and tested under the control of an ENT specialist.**

> Very handy! For adults, simply spray twice per nostril per use, and for children over three years old, one spray per nostril per use is enough. Spray 5 times per day in total.

DID YOU KNOW?

The different symptoms of rhinitis (such as nasal congestion, ears, tiredness, nocturnal awakening, headaches) can have a major impact in people's quality of life. Rhinitis usually generates absenteeism at work: a recent survey assessed that persons suffering from rhinitis were absent from work for 17.6 days because of it. In children this absenteeism can be accompanied by poorer school results (University Hospital Southampton)**.



Discover also within our range, our purifying air spray, our rest and relax products, and our muscles and joints roller and gel.

Available at larger , ,  and independent pharmacies.

For any information or question: uk.info@puresSENTIEL.com

The Puressentiel Hypertonic Nasal Spray is a medical device bearing the CE mark. Read the information on pack. *100% natural origin. **Roberts Get al. Paediatric rhinitis: position paper of the European Academy of Allergy and clinical Immunology Allergy 2013.



RESPIRATORY

Efficacy at its purest



Calming flare-ups

Once a month, we try out a therapy, treatment or specialist retreat in a bid to solve an ongoing health issue – this month, our beauty & wellbeing director **Eminé Ali Rushton** tackles eczema

THE DILEMMA

'I had eczema as a child, but overcame it with dietary changes. In adulthood, I'm still prone to random flare-ups during periods of unusually high stress'

Eminé

THE TREATMENTS

I was allergy-tested as a child and cow's milk came up through the roof. Once I cut that out, my eczema (and asthma) faded into oblivion. Recently, the link has been stress-related. I remember studying for finals at university and having an all-over body flare-up which surprised me. I had to use a steroid cream to calm it. The recent flare-up, on the palms of both hands (something I'd never had before), was unusually stubborn. After six months with very little improvement, I met Dr Mervyn Patterson at Woodford Medical. His common-sense advice helped

reinforce the changes I needed to make – and although I hate steroid creams, he said there was no harm in using them for several weeks until the eczema had abated, rather than holding out until things were impossibly sore, then using them as a one-off to bring down inflammation.

I was told to keep my hands out of water – tricky, given that we all need to wash our hands, but I tried to keep my palms dry while washing my fingers. He prescribed Epionce Medical Barrier Cream, £27.50, a science-backed emollient that helps skin regain and retain its ideal lipid ratio. I used this 20-odd times a day, religious about using it after steroid cream (to prevent skin drying out further) and after contact with water. I also booked in to see nutritional therapist Gabriela Peacock, to see if my healthy diet was lacking something crucial.

THE OUTCOME

The cream helped bolster my sore skin and, within a couple of weeks, the redness had gone and flare-ups reduced. My hands started to feel soft again – also due, I believe, to the high doses of omega 3 fish oils I'd started taking daily. Peacock said: 'When someone suffers with any atopic condition [eczema, hayfever or asthma] they have a defect of a specific converting

enzyme, delta-6-desaturase, which means they can't convert essential fatty acids found in vegetarian sources [pumpkin seeds, flaxseeds, hemp seeds and sunflower seeds] into EPA and DHA (omega 3).'

Given that I'd always taken vegetarian-only sources, it was a revelation! 'Fish oils, on the other hand, have already been prepared for immediate absorption into the body, so if someone suffers with an atopic condition, fish oil supplements, or oily fish, will be the only way to ensure enough essential fatty acids are being absorbed,' Peacock adds. 'Omega 3 eases the symptoms of conditions such as eczema.' She put me on four capsules of MorEPA Platinum, a high-dosage omega 3 fish oil, for the short term to bring down inflammation. Once it cleared, I switched to a dose of one or two capsules daily. If I ate a lot of oily fish, I reduced the supplements accordingly. 'Omega 3 is important for optimal brain function, but every cell in the body also has a membrane which consists of omega 3, so if you're not processing enough omega 3, your cells are vulnerable to damage and degradation.'

It's been a month now and I've definitely seen an improvement, not just with the eczema clearing, but in the health and suppleness of my skin in general.

See gpnutrition.co.uk and woodfordmedical.com

NEXT MONTH: WE TAKE A LOOK AT SEASONAL ATTUNEMENT THERAPY

PSYCHOLOGIES
MAGAZINE

Free yourself from stress

Feel calm in any situation with the *Psychologies* StressLess app

Stressful situations can pop up at the oddest moments and in the strangest places. And it's not always possible to have the latest issue of *Psychologies* nearby when you're just out of a meeting at work or held up by a delayed train.

We have been keeping some help close at hand on our phones and tablets – our new StressLess app

is filled with exercises and advice to help you manage your time, master your feelings and communicate assertively and calmly.

Easy coaching exercises mean that you can practise your new skills day after day, following a useful training programme. It doesn't take long – just five minutes a day will create more calm and happiness in your life.

HOW THE STRESSLESS APP WORKS

1 LOWER THE PRESSURE

Stress can act like poison. To neutralise its toxic effects, we've devised special coaching exercises to help you find peace both mentally and physically. Exercises and advice will help change your thought patterns and body language, so you can live a calmer life with more balanced relationships.

2 MANAGE YOUR TIME

Discover how to prioritise tasks and make time for yourself.

3 REGULATE YOUR FEELINGS

Take our test to discover how you can stop being overwhelmed by your feelings and other people's, and stay calm.

4 EXPRESS YOURSELF SERENELY

Are you able to say no? Do you handle criticism well – or do you tend to take it personally? Use the app's exercises to help you get your point across calmly, but firmly, whether at home, work or when you're with friends and family.



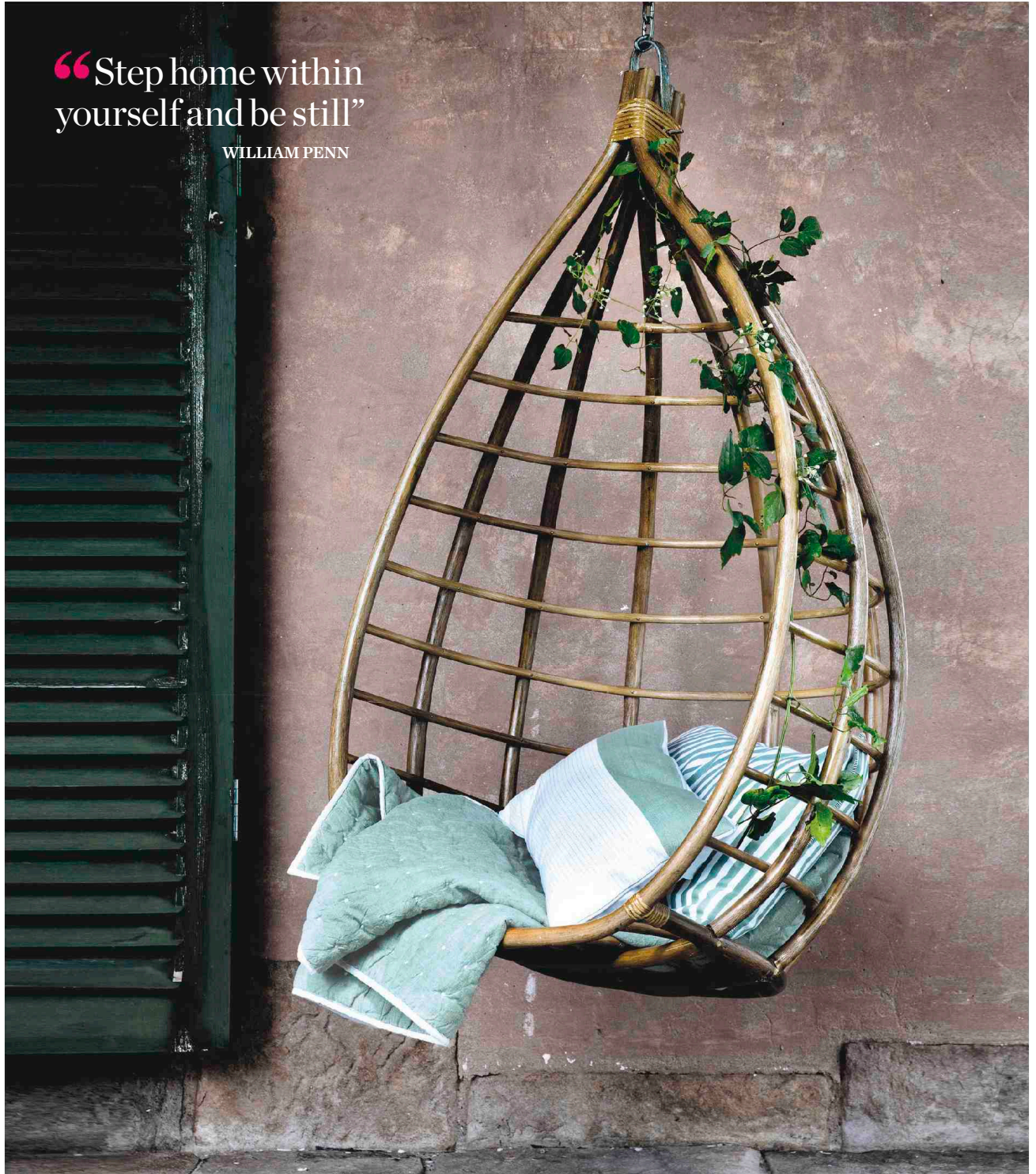
Available to download now on iTunes and Google Play, £2.99

The Retreat

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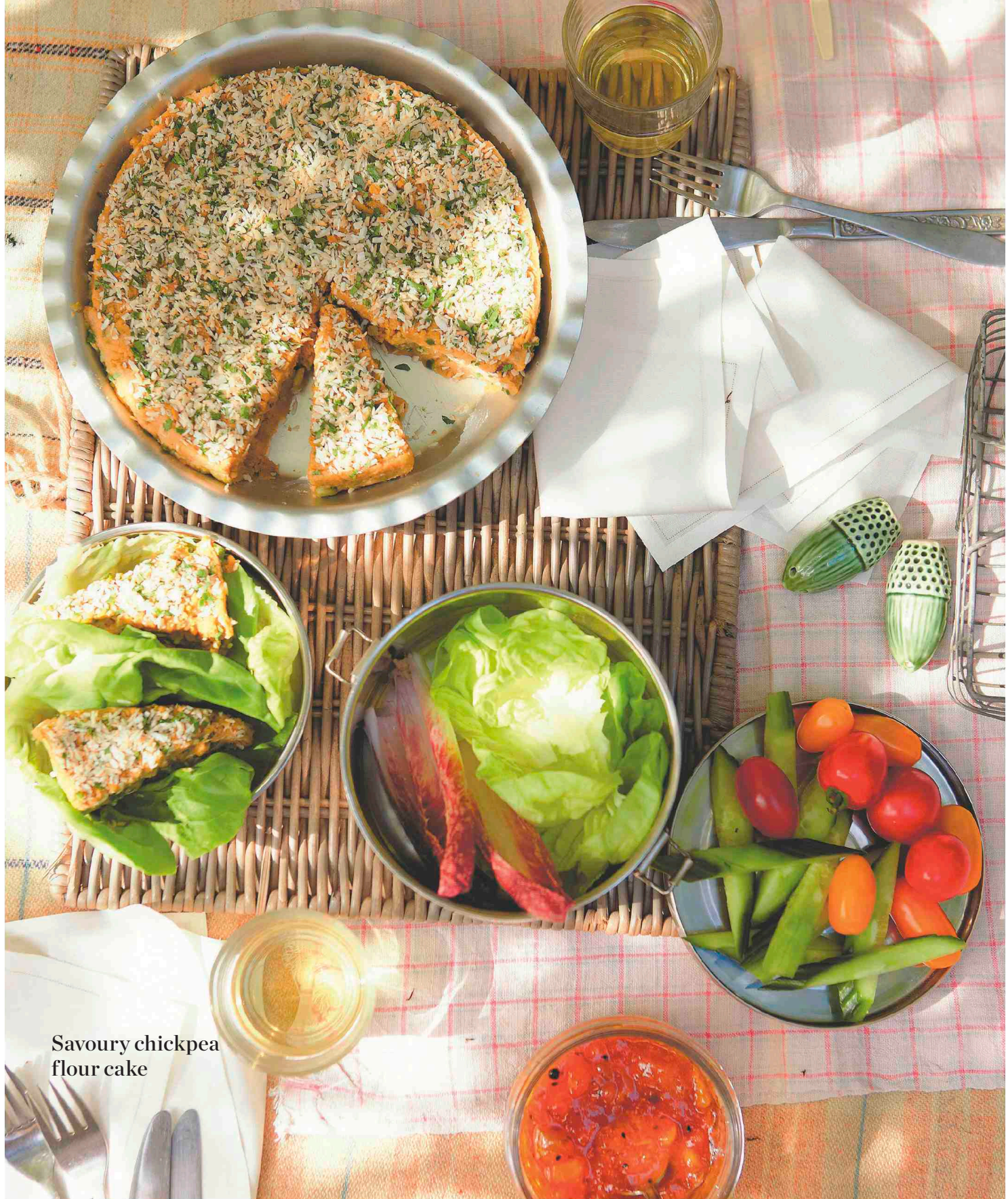
“Step home within
yourself and be still”

WILLIAM PENN



*LOTT HANGING CHAIR, £282.80, BROSTE COPENHAGEN. FOR STOCKISTS, SEE PAGE 140

THE RETREAT } feasting



Savoury chickpea
flour cake

PICNIC & MIX

Celebrate the great British outdoors, with convivial debate and communal eating against nature's most beautiful backdrops

RECIPES LAURA MASON/NATIONAL TRUST BOOKS

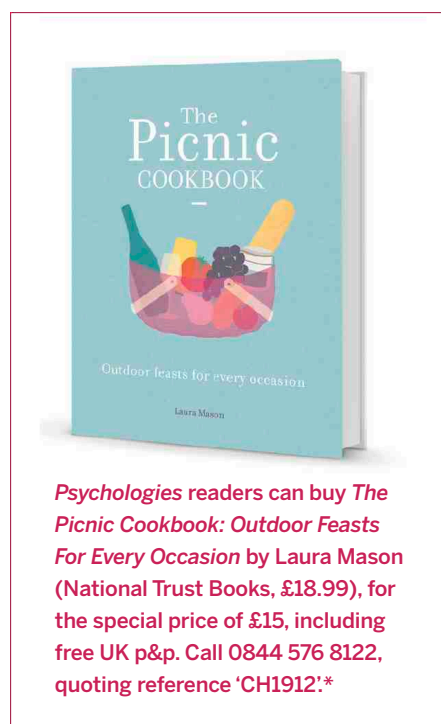
PHOTOGRAPHS YUKI SUGUIRA



Pressed
sandwiches

>>> **F**rom the prickly picnic in Jane Austen's *Emma* to Enid Blyton's *Famous Five* and their lashings of ginger beer, the idea of finding the perfect spot, laying a blanket over grass, and settling down to delicious nibbles is deeply rooted in the British psyche. As the weather is so unreliable, we've come to revel in blue-skied days when we sit on the lawn amid little pots of things to pick from.

The word 'picnic' entered the English language in the late 1700s, meaning a pleasant excursion including an outdoor meal. 'The Romantic movement also brought new ideas about the joys of being outdoors, especially in rugged scenery. William and Dorothy Wordsworth and their circle were notable picnickers,' says Laura Mason in *The Picnic Cookbook*, a National Trust book that celebrates 'outdoor feasts for every occasion'. And given that half the *Psychologies* team are National Trust members (and one is even married to a National Trust ranger), we're more inclined than most to find the ideal excuse to picnic – come rain or shine.



Psychologies readers can buy *The Picnic Cookbook: Outdoor Feasts For Every Occasion* by Laura Mason (National Trust Books, £18.99), for the special price of £15, including free UK p&p. Call 0844 576 8122, quoting reference 'CH1912'.*

BUTTERMILK POSSET WITH PEACHES & REDCURRANTS

This is a fresh-tasting dessert where the cream is 'set' with buttermilk instead of the more usual lemon juice. The fruit purée is tart to contrast with the soft sweetness of the posset

SERVES 4

- 400ml double cream
- 1 vanilla pod
- 200ml buttermilk
- 125g caster sugar

FOR THE FRUIT PURÉE:

- 200g redcurrants
- 2 tsp sugar
- 2 small white flat or doughnut peaches

STEP ONE To make the fruit purée, put the redcurrants in a saucepan over a low heat and cook gently until the juice starts to run. Bring to the boil, stir well, then remove from the heat and rub through a sieve to extract as much pulp as possible. Discard the seeds. Stir the sugar into the purée until dissolved.

STEP TWO Put the peaches in a bowl of boiling water for up to 1 minute (ripe peaches will take less time). Remove and cool under cold water. Use the tip of a knife to loosen the skin, then peel it off. Cut the peaches in half and remove the stones. Cut the flesh into small slices and mix with the redcurrant purée. Divide this mixture among 4 glasses (I use chunky tumblers which hold about 300ml) and chill.

STEP THREE Put the cream and the vanilla pod in a heavy-based saucepan over a low heat. Heat very gently until the cream comes to boiling point – about 15 minutes, if possible. (If it reaches boiling point quickly, turn off the heat and leave to infuse for the remainder of the time.) Remove the vanilla pod. (Rinse and dry it, then return it to the sugar jar for future use.)

STEP FOUR Put the buttermilk in a heatproof bowl. Add the sugar to the cream and stir well to dissolve. Heat a little more, to ensure the mixture boils. Immediately remove the pan from the heat and pour the cream mixture into the bowl containing the buttermilk. Stir well, then divide this posset mixture among the glasses. Chill for several hours. To carry, put the glasses over a chilled ice pack in a box or other container so that they will remain upright. >>>



Buttermilk posset
with peaches and
redcurrants

>>>



SAVOURY CHICKPEA FLOUR CAKE

This cake is vegan, gluten-free, nutritious, filling and very tasty

SERVES 4-6

- 3 tbsp sunflower oil, plus extra for greasing
- 120g gram/chickpea flour
- 60g peas
- pinch of sugar
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 5-6 mint sprigs, leaves chopped
- 1 fresh green chilli, deseeded and chopped
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- a pinch of fennel seeds
- 1 tsp black peppercorns
- 1 tsp salt
- pinch of ground turmeric
- 2 large garlic cloves
- thumb-sized piece of fresh root ginger, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1 small-medium onion, thinly sliced

STEP ONE Preheat the oven to 150°C; grease a small cake tin. Spread the gram flour on a baking tray and cook in the oven for 30-40 minutes, stirring occasionally, until it turns a little darker and gives off a toasted aroma. Transfer to a bowl and gradually stir in 350ml water to make a thick batter. Leave to rest.

STEP TWO Cook the peas in boiling water until tender. Drain, then mash roughly and stir in sugar and lemon juice. Stir in mint leaves and chilli, then leave to cool.

STEP THREE Toast cumin, coriander, fennel and peppercorns in a dry pan, stirring, until they release a toasted aroma. Grind to a powder. Add salt and turmeric. Process garlic and ginger in a blender with 2tbsp water to make a paste.

STEP FOUR Fry onion in a pan gently for a few minutes until soft, but not coloured. Stir in the garlic-and-ginger paste and cook for 2 minutes, stirring well, then add the spice mixture. Fry for 1 minute, then stir in the chickpea flour batter. Cook gently, stirring constantly, until the mixture becomes quite sticky. It will become difficult to stir, but keep going, otherwise it will be too soft – it will take 10-15 minutes.

STEP FIVE Drop half the mixture into the oiled tin, then put the pea and herb mixture on top, finishing with the remainder of the chickpea mixture, pressing it down well. Use a fork to roughen the top.

STEP SIX Chop a few fresh mint and coriander leaves with 1 green chilli. Toast 1 tbsp of dessicated coconut lightly in a dry frying pan, then stir it into the herb mix and press lightly on top of the mixture in the tin. Chill overnight, then cut into wedges and serve.



PRESSED SANDWICHES

These sandwiches are known to my family as 'motorway sandwiches',

because they are a favourite choice for long car journeys, but don't limit them to just that – they're also great for country walks and picnics. Ingredients need to be chosen carefully to give a filling with a pleasant balance of the relatively salty and relatively mild, and a moisture content that both helps to hold the sandwich together and makes it good to eat

MAKES 8 PIECES/SERVES 2-4

- 1 part-baked ciabatta loaf
- 3-4 tbsp pesto, such as Pesto Genovese
- 1 small handful of rocket leaves
- 100g Italian cooked ham with herbs, thinly sliced
- 100g Gorgonzola Dolce, rind removed

STEP ONE Bake the ciabatta as instructed on the packet and leave to cool. Cut the loaf in half lengthways. Spread the cut sides with pesto. Distribute the rocket leaves over the base, followed by the ham.

STEP TWO Layer the cheese in slices over the ham, then put the top on the loaf and press lightly with your hand so that everything sticks together. Wrap tightly in clingfilm, foil or greaseproof paper, as snugly as possible. Put the whole thing in the fridge overnight, preferably between two boards or plates with a small weight, such as a tin of tomatoes, on top.

STEP THREE Next day, unwrap the sandwich, leaving the sandwich on top of the wrapping, and carefully cut it into eight diagonal slices. Rewrap it tightly. Remember to take a few pieces of kitchen paper for greasy fingers and in case of spills.

STEP FOUR The sandwiches can also be made in individual ciabatta rolls instead of one long one. Wrap them separately, and tightly, in clingfilm. As long as this is done tightly, pressing is not essential. And a baguette can be used instead of the ciabatta.

GOOD THOUGHTS



“The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain”

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How to... purify with clay

Nutritional therapist Eve Kalinik explains the uses of clay and charcoal

Many of us are familiar with the topical use of clay in various beauty products and some may also be aware of taking Bentonite clay, or charcoal, internally, to help with digestive and detoxification issues. Both have been traditionally used for medicinal purposes related to the absorption of toxins, pesticides and heavy metals and helping to transport these out of the body, but they are now taking centre-stage in juices and elixirs as part of a day-to-day routine. But what exactly are they and how should you be using them?

The most renowned of the clays is the Bentonite aka 'Montmorillonite' and it's this one that is reported to have the most powerful healing properties. It is creamy-grey in colour and is essentially composed of aged volcanic ash that can be applied topically or taken internally. Carbon or activated charcoal gets its activation from steaming its starting material (usually willow bark) to high

temperatures to make it more porous and hence more effective in its absorption. It comes in a powder or stick form. Both of these alkalising substances work by being high in negatively charged ions, which then attract those positive ones omitted from toxins. The clay and charcoal then binds to impurities in the intestinal tract or skin, which helps eliminate or draw the toxins out of the body. A bit like a detox sponge! Research is not conclusive, but they have been shown to be effective for some people who suffer with constipation and bloating, as well as helping to improve skin health. However, it's crucial that these should be used with the guidance of a practitioner, as in neat form the potency of both clay and charcoal could also affect the absorption of other nutrients, and even affect certain medications – so please ensure that you're working with someone who can give you the right advice before you take the plunge.

evekalinik.com

HOW TO GET DOWN TO EARTH

If clay and charcoal pique your interest, here's how to get them into your day, in a healthy, manageable way:

● **MAKE A BENTONITE FACE MASK** – measure half a teaspoon of clay into a cup, add three drops of jojoba oil to balance skin, or three drops of apricot oil to moisturise, some water, and mix to form a smooth paste. Apply to clean skin, leave for 20 minutes, then rinse. We like Indigo Herbs Pure Bentonite Clay Powder, £14.99 for 150g.

● **AS A MOUTH RINSE**, to help whiten and remineralise teeth – shake up to half a teaspoon of Bentonite clay in warm water, and gargle thoroughly for two minutes, then expel, and rinse your mouth with water.

● **FILTER YOUR WATER** – add activated charcoal sticks to water to filter it. They look beautiful and do the job perfectly. I love the ones from Sort of Coal.

● **PICK UP A CHARCOAL-INFUSED JUICE** or elixir – Raw Press and Botanic Lab both sell these online and via their London stores.





PATTERN RECOGNITION

Life without pattern would be dull. Add spontaneity and meaning to your space without descending into chaos by following one simple rule...

EDITED BY LAUREN HADDEN PHOTOGRAPHS GRAHAM ATKINS-HUGHES

Inspiring neurologist Oliver Sacks has written, 'To live on a day-to-day basis is insufficient for human beings; we need to transcend, transport, escape; we need meaning, understanding and explanation; we need to see overall patterns in our lives.'

Learning to live with the chaos of everyday existence is a great skill, but Sacks is right: we like to create order out of the chaos to add meaning to

our existence. It's a balancing act, one that's easy to perform in your home if you know the secret to taking risks with repeating shapes. This winning secret is hidden in a new book by interiors whizz Abigail Ahern, called *Colour* (Quadrille, £20). 'The more you rein in the colour palette, the more you can mix pattern to your heart's content,' she explains. 'The tamer the hues, the wilder you can go with pattern.'

Ramp up the pattern for instant pizzazz. Avoid being too co-ordinated and matchy-matchy. If you keep the colour palette reined in, you can experiment with contrasting patterns





An outside space
can also be another
'room'. Clashing
patterns are fun in a
garden, where things
are even more
relaxed than indoors



This individual take on a kitchen bar feels industrial, raw, quirky and fabulous. The textured wood and brick are a great foil for the neon sign, bottles and patterned cups

It takes skill to put together an eclectic blend of furniture, colour, patterns and texture. No formulaic rules have been followed here – visual risk-taking has created an exciting, warm dining space





Persephone cushion, £148, House of Hackney



Adras Ikat cushion, £29, Urbanara

Raised-design glassware, from £2.99 for a tumbler, Zara Home



Amarelo glass bottle, £6, Habitat

Chirali bedspread, £195, Toast



Carine ceramic vase, £8, Habitat

Be bold

'Many people are scared of introducing pattern,' says interiors expert Abigail Ahern. 'But it's easy to start small. Accessories and textiles are the simplest route to go down, so add a couple of contrasting patterned cushions, vases or rugs, and see the dimensions of your room change before your eyes.' Then, to add further interest to your space, vary the scale. 'Lots of small-scale patterns in a room can result in a one-way ticket to Dullsville, so mix it up,' Ahern says.

Beyond deciding on a colour palette to play with and keeping an eye on scale, you don't need a grand plan. The best ingredient, she says, is 'a dash of spontaneity. So if you like it, go for it!'



District Eight breakfast bar stool, £249, Out & Out Original



Glass vase, £39, BoConcept



Garden floral mugs, £12 each, Anthropologie



Chopping board, £29, Jonna Saarinen at Etsy



READER OFFER
Psychologies readers can buy a copy of *Colour* (Quadrille, £20) for the special price of £15 including free UK postage and packing. To order, call 01256 302699 and quote the reference 'DES'.

*OFFER SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. FOR STOCKISTS, SEE PAGE 140



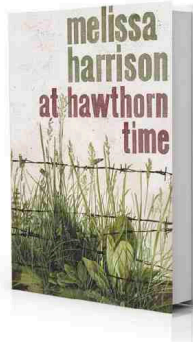
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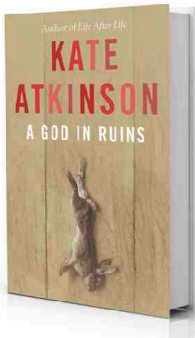
Villa America

by Liza Klaussmann (Picador, £12.99)
The follow-up to *Tigers In Red Weather* heads to the seductive heat of the Riviera and the gorgeous world of Sara and Gerald Murphy, and their coterie of famous friends – Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, the Hemingways, Dorothy Parker. The Murphys' mission – to live life radiantly – is wonderfully detailed. But at the heart of this book is sadness, loss and melancholy love, as brutal reality batters their beautiful barricade.



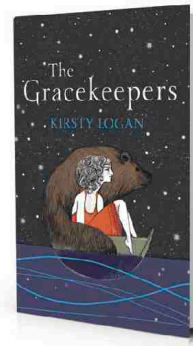
At Hawthorn Time

by Melissa Harrison (Bloomsbury, £16.99)
Nature blossoms from every page of this fine second novel, a slow and marvellous unfurling, as Jack wanders a mythical landscape, looking for familiar work in a world that's changing. His path crosses with Kitty and Howard, whose marriage is in disarray, and with Jamie, who has dreams of escape, despite his kinship to local fields. An unsentimental, celebratory look at land and the love it inspires.



A God In Ruins

by Kate Atkinson (Doubleday, £20)
Described as 'a companion piece' to the astounding *Life After Life*, this revisits the character of Teddy, who has come through the trauma of war determined to live a quiet, kind life. Haunted by memories, worried about his grandchildren, bamboozled by his difficult daughter Viola, Teddy believes in poetry, dignity and grace. It's a riveting exploration of the complexities of family life, where there are many versions of the truth.



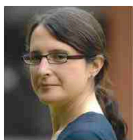
The Gracekeepers

by Kirsty Logan (Vintage, £12.99)
There's a dreamy coolness to this magical debut, set in a watery world of sea-going circuses, odd burial customs and girls with webbed hands and feet. North and her bear work their stage magic, attempting to keep on the good side of the glitter-cheeked circus master, while on an isolated island Callanish spends her days regretting past misdeeds. When the two meet, their futures are transformed into something truly rich and strange.

FIRST PAGE

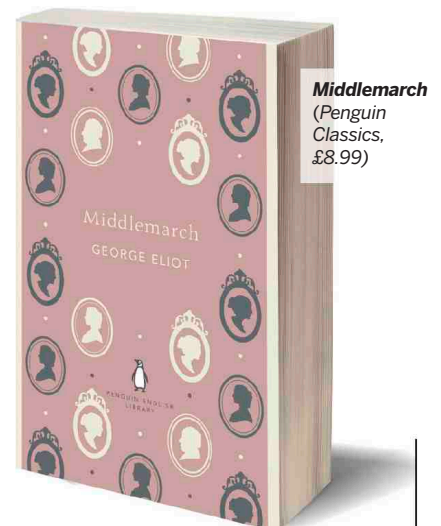
'Calm poured through his body and the wind was music. The cold, dewy air tasted like spring moss, like pine.' From Sarah Leipziger's 'The Mountain Can Wait' (Tinder Press), out 7 May.

THE BOOK THAT MADE ME by author Sarah Moss



'I read George Eliot's *Middlemarch* at about 15, eager for serious writing. Many 19th-century novels are romances, and I approached *Middlemarch* with that expectation. At first I seemed to be right; two sisters were about to embark on the adventures of courtship. Being bookish, I identified with serious Dorothea, and I understood that her marriage to the elderly, desiccated Casaubon wasn't meant to be a happy ending. Then I turned a page and met: 'But why always Dorothea? Was her point of view the only possible one?' Oh. Other points of view. Virginia Woolf called *Middlemarch* "one of the few English novels written for grown-up people". It broke the narcissism of adolescence for me.'

'Signs For Lost Children', Sarah's next novel, will be published by Granta in July



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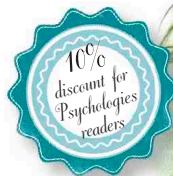
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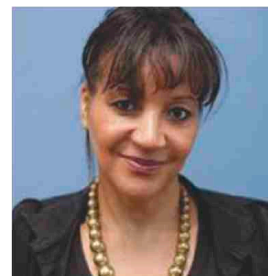
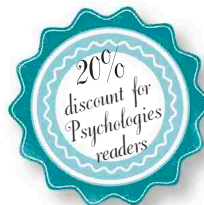
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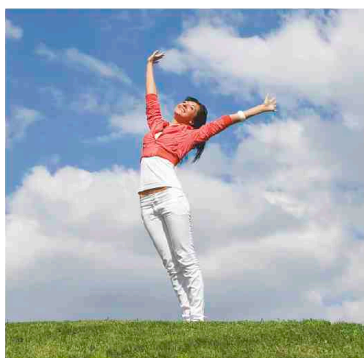
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Back in the driving seat



YESTERDAY, I DROVE 30 miles. This may not seem terribly exciting to anybody else but when I got home, I jumped out of my car and did a victory dance.

I have a driving phobia or, rather, I did. I got it under control for some time but, in the past few months, it has decided to raise its scary head again. So I've been doing the sensible thing; not driving. Or, at least, for anybody with a phobia, it seems sensible.

When Dave, who looks after my car, looks at the mileage gauge, he has a tendency to burst out laughing. 'Here comes the careful lady driver,' he bellows across the forecourt of the garage. I smile good-naturedly but, for me, it isn't funny.

It is terrifying. I couldn't drive for 10 years, and when I say couldn't, I mean I really couldn't. It is not fabulously sensible to get behind a steering wheel if you are liable to faint. Even as a passenger, my heart raced, my hands became clammy with fear and I shook like a leaf. So I put my head down and took up tapestry. My house is covered with carefully stitched cushions.

I was terribly ashamed and felt like an idiot – an emotion not helped when people said blithely, 'Oh, come on, even stupid people can drive.' Obviously, there are an awful lot of stupid people on the roads. You can give me a spider, a moth, a bat, a bird or even a snake, and we will be merry playmates, perhaps because I am terribly stupid and see no danger. I tried psychologists and hypnotherapy, but nothing helped. In the end, after a decade of fear and mortification, I decided it had to stop so

Sally Brampton is a journalist, agony aunt, and author of 'Shoot The Damn Dog: A Memoir Of Depression' (Bloomsbury, £7.99)

I ordered a new car. I chose one I really, really wanted; the new Mini, which was desperately cool when it first came out – unlike me. It stayed parked outside my house for weeks until the day came when somebody had to win – the car or me.

So I called a driving school. When was my test? they asked me. Um, I passed it 17 years ago, first time; the time when I used to really love driving. When I explained that I had a phobia and needed the very nicest instructor they had, they told me I needed Geoffrey, so I booked him for four hours every day for a week. Geoffrey was quite the nicest man I've ever met which was fortunate – for both of us, because we spent an awful lot of time together – it was possibly more awful for him. And, once we had conquered the M25, M1 and M4, he got out of the car and gave me a high five. I gave him a bottle of whisky, which probably isn't the ideal present for a driving instructor, but he liked it.

I drove and drove and drove, for years, until suddenly I came to a complete stop. I have no idea why, but as Geoffrey wasn't around, I was once again confronted by a battle of wills – the car or me. Somebody had to go and generally it was me – on public transport.

I felt like an idiot, all over again. So me and the car, we had a long talk, and eventually, I asked it out on a date, every day, for an hour. Our relationship is slowly improving, which is why you now find me dancing on the pavement.

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